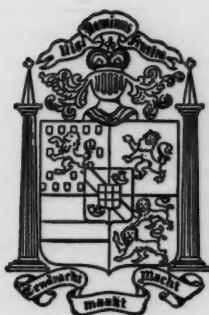


# The REFORMED REVIEW



The Reformed Church in America

*A Quarterly Journal of the*  
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# The Reformed Review

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## A Quarterly Journal of the Western Theological Seminary

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## A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

### THE SATELLITES AND THE STAR

HENRY BAST

*"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."*

—Matthew 2:1, 2

The exultant exclamation of the wise men, "We have seen his star in the east," comes to us this Christmas season with new interest and a new meaning. Men have always been interested in the stars. Scientists, poets, and philosophers, as well as Christian theologians, have looked at the stars and studied them and drawn knowledge and inspiration from them, but this Christmas season, we shall find men looking, not only at the stars which God created, but looking and listening for sights and sounds of man-made stars, which we call satellites. In fact, we are engaged just now in a feverish race to see who can send out from this earth the biggest satellite and send it out the fastest and farthest. These little moons and satellites which man has invented represent possibly the greatest advance in science, in human knowledge and skill, ever achieved by the human race. Man can now push out from the surface of this earth a fairly large object which will travel freely in an orbit around the circumference of the earth. The strange thing about these satellites, however, is that they have produced more fear and apprehension in the hearts of men than joy and hope. They represent not only the farthest advancement man has made in science, but they also represent the fear that man has of man. This fear is not unfounded, for the development of these first satellites is part of an arms race that has stirred the nations to feverish activity in the further development of missiles.

In spite of the peril we face, there are many who are hailing the discovery and development of the satellites as the greatest achievement in history. Things are happening so fast in the realm of scientific discovery that we are creating new names for ages rather rapidly. It was only a decade ago that man invented the atomic bomb and with its explosion coined the phrase the "Atomic Age." With man's invention of a satellite we are already speaking of the "Space Age."

In this Christmas season our attention is directed to another heavenly object whose appearance hailed a really new age. Whatever importance or significance we may attach to the appearance of the satellites, we know, when we take a long view of history, that they are relatively insignificant, that they are merely stages in a gradual development. The most important event in history was the event that was announced by the appearance of the star of Bethlehem. In the next few years we may see many little stars and moons spinning around our planet. That the coming of Jesus Christ into the world is the greatest event of history is supported by evidence far beyond the Bible or the Church or any article of the Christian faith. That the coming of Christ is the most important event in history is supported by the calendar from which we now date every event. Every letter written, every document issued by a nation, every business contract is dated from the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even Sputnik and Explorer must be dated by the calendar year. We all know that when we write 1958 A.D. we are merely writing the abbreviated form for the full expression, "in the year of our Lord." Here then is indisputable evidence that the coming of Christ is the most important event in history and that Jesus Christ Himself is the Lord of history. This being true, how tragic it is that men should know all about the operation and movements of the earthly satellites but know nothing about *the Star*, the star God created to guide the wise men to Jesus Christ. We do well to follow the example of these ancient wise men and ask their question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." Let us thank God for science, let us thank God for the development of every scientific instrument, but let us never worship science nor the inventions of science. Let us worship only Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. Let us make all we do conform to the hymns we sing at Christmas, hymns like this, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!"

The coming of Christ is not only the most important event in history, His coming is the most important event for each one of us. We must seek Him with all the diligence and zeal of the wise men for He only can fulfill our deepest needs. He only can save us from our sins. He only can give us peace and joy and hope, and by Him only can we ever enter the gates of glory beyond the stars into God's heavenly kingdom. Jesus Himself said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (John 17:3).

The manner in which the wise men found Christ furnishes us with some very important instruction on how we too may find and know Jesus Christ as our Savior and King. There are two points of similarity in the quest of the wise men and the way we find Christ today.



The first is that the wise men found Christ because they followed the light they had. They were not Jews, as you know, born in the covenant, members of Israel, the people of God, in possession of all the oracles that spoke of the coming of the Savior and the Redeemer. These wise men were Gentiles. They lived far from Jerusalem, but while millions of God's privileged people never saw or recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the Savior of the world, these wise men, these pagans, following the light that God gave them, came to know and worship Jesus Christ as their Savior and their King. They followed the star and it led them to Bethlehem and to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It may be that you think of the wise men at Christmas time with a little bit of envy. After reading the story you may have said to yourself, "If only God would give me some external, supernatural sign like the star, I would surely worship and serve Jesus Christ as my Savior and my Lord." I can appreciate that point of view for I have felt that way too, and it took me a long time to understand that God has given us in this twentieth century a better guide than the star which led the wise men to Jesus Christ. It too, is an external guide and it also is supernatural in origin just as the star was. The guide that God has given to us is the Bible, His holy, infallible Word. The Bible is external. It is a book you can read, and it will point you infallibly to Jesus Christ the Savior. It tells exactly how your sins can be forgiven; how you can be made a new creature; how your heart can be filled with joy and peace and hope; and how you can go to heaven. The star which led the wise men to Christ was not an ordinary star. Though it resembled the other stars in some things, it was a specially created star which God used for that one purpose. So the Bible is a book but not an ordinary book. It is the revelation of God. It is supernatural in origin. The Bible owes its origin to the direct creative activity of the Holy Spirit of God. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20, 21). Just as the wise men followed the light they had and it led them to Christ, so we, too, by following the light God gives us in His Word, the Bible, can be led to Jesus Christ and full salvation.

We have one advantage over the wise men. The star was a limited revelation. It could be seen in only one area, but the Bible can be read by all men. God has revealed himself and the way of salvation to men over a long period of time, and in that period of revelation He used various means according to the state of development of men in the world at the time. But when He completed His revelation in Jesus Christ, He adopted a new and final method of communication with all men. God

speaks to men today by His Spirit and the means that He uses is the Bible, the Word of God written. Here all men can find Him, and, we may add, in our day most men in their own language. Let us, therefore, follow the light that God now gives, the full light in Jesus Christ and in His Word.

The second reason the wise men found Christ and worshipped Him as Savior and King is because they were men of faith. They found Christ by faith. They came to Jerusalem asking the question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Where did they get the information that a King was coming? How did they learn that a King was coming who would be more than a man, whom they must worship and adore? They did not get it from the star. The star of Bethlehem did not send out signals like our Explorer. No message came from the star. It shone silently. It was only a sign. They received their knowledge of the coming of a Savior and a King for all men from the Scriptures. The Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament, were circulated at that time through all the world, and in the Greek language. The wise men may not have read the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, but they had heard and they believed them. This was their faith. The star was a sign that the promise of the coming Messiah and King had been fulfilled. Because they believed these promises of God, they found the King whom they could worship and adore. Here they offered their allegiance and here they found their hearts' true home.

"As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.  
"Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide."

## A NOTE ON THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

HOWARD G. HAGEMAN

At the very beginning attention should be drawn to the exact wording of the title. It may seem merely a quibble to say that there is a world of difference between a "Reformed doctrine of the ministry" and a "doctrine of the Reformed ministry." But something very important is at stake here. The Reformed fathers would have despised and rejected any "doctrine of the Reformed ministry" as immediately shutting them out of the Holy Catholic Church. Never for one moment did they doubt that their ministry was a true part of their inheritance from that Church and they wanted no part of any theology which made the Reformed Church a sect. While Calvin's ordination is still something of a mystery, neither Zwingli nor Bucer, to cite but two examples, ever subjected themselves to any form of re-ordination. Theirs was the ministry of the Church of Christ as they had received it, but now it was seen and understood by a Church that was Reformed according to the Word of God.

The fact that our Reformed heritage has always insisted that its ministry is not a sectarian one but part of the ministry of the Holy Catholic Church makes the question of the ministry a very essential one in these days of ecumenical discussion. For it is surely no secret that in these discussions it is precisely the question of the ministry which has proved baffling and vexing. It is easy to blame the difficulty on the various episcopal churches with their rigid insistence on the episcopacy as essential to the being of the Church. And indeed, they have their share of the blame to bear.

But is not the vexation just as much due to churches like our own which, by their very impatience with the question of the ministry, indicate that they think it a matter of no great moment? Beyond any doubt, large numbers of people in the Reformed Church in America think of the ministry as simply an arrangement of obvious ecclesiastical convenience, the creation of a professionally religious class to get some very necessary jobs done. Would it be too much to say that we resent the finickiness of the Episcopalians and others at this point just because it makes us uncomfortably aware of our own poverty? How many of our people would even think that the ministry was a fit subject to be included in the *doctrines* of our Church?

In view of this general attitude it is surprising to discover not only that the ministry is, quite literally, part of our doctrine (*Belgic Confession*, 30 and 31) but that it is rather explicitly worked out in the *Liturgy*. The Reformed Church in America need never hide its face in any discussion about the ministry. It has a doctrine of the ministry as carefully worked out and as completely documented as any church in Christendom. We suffer not so much from a lack of doctrine as from a neglect of it, not to say a contempt for it. These notes can only suggest it in outline.

I. The *Liturgy* makes it abundantly clear that the ministry is a divine gift, not a human creation. In this, of course, the *Liturgy* is only echoing the words of St. Paul, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." These are words which the *Liturgy* cites (p. 66) in support of its contention that God, "in gathering unto Himself from among the lost children of men a Church unto life eternal, is pleased therein to use the ministry of men."

The Reformed Church, therefore, is ranged squarely on the side of those who believe that the ministry is a divine appointment, our Lord's Ascension gift to His Church. We may have all kinds of discussion about the forms of the ministry. But that there must be a ministry can never be a matter for discussion; it is, we believe, as much a part of our Lord's command as, for example, the two sacraments of baptism and the Holy Supper.

It should be noted that the Reformed Church is at this point to be classified not only with the Presbyterian, but the Episcopal, Orthodox, and even Roman Catholic Churches, as against the Baptist, Congregational, and sectarian churches. We may not approve of all the company in which we find ourselves, but there we are nevertheless! The basic cleavage is not, as it is so often made out to be, between episcopal and non-episcopal theories of the ministry. Actually, that is rather a secondary question. The basic cleavage is between those churches which believe that the ministry comes from Christ, part of His appointment, and those who believe that the ministry comes from the Church, part of its own domestic arrangement. In answer to the question, "Is the ministry an appointment or an arrangement?" the Reformed Church answer is clear. In the words of our original *Liturgy*, "The pastoral office is an institution of Christ."

In this connection it is interesting to note that our *Liturgy* is not afraid of "apostolic succession" either. The final paragraph of the instruction (p. 66) suggests this when it says,

From this may be learned how glorious the office of the Christian ministry is and how necessary it is for man's salvation; which is the reason why the

Lord will have such an office always to remain. For He said when He sent forth His Apostles: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The suggestion is much clearer, however, when we read the full text of the old *Liturgy* (p. 106), of which our present version is a condensation.

For Christ said when he sent forth his Apostles to officiate in this holy function, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" where we see his pleasure is, that this holy office (for the persons to whom he here speaketh could not live to the end of the world), should always be maintained on earth. And therefore Paul exhorted Timothy, "to commit that which he had heard of him to faithful men, who should be able to teach others."

Needless to say, we do not have here any support of what has, perhaps irreverently, been called the "Daisy chain" theory of apostolic succession, the notion that one can trace his pedigree back to the Apostles the way some Americans trace theirs back to the *Mayflower*! Back to the Apostles we go, and that in a direct line. But the line is a line of apostolic witness. We stand in the succession of the Apostles because the Gospel to which we witness is the same as that to which they testified.

Nevertheless, the old *Liturgy* makes it clear that the ministry is in the line of succession to the Apostles, that it continues their work on earth to the end of time. That work, of course, is quite simply witnessing to Jesus Christ. As we shall see, this work of witnessing is capable of a number of subdivisions when we start to consider the prophetic, the sacramental, the pastoral, and the disciplinary functions of the ministry. But, however important each of them may be in itself, it can only really be understood in its full context as part of the apostolic task—witnessing to Jesus Christ.

A further word must be added about the service of ordination. From the point of view of the Reformed Church we must always be careful to avoid leaving any impression that in ordination the Church is, as it were, creating its ministry. The Church is simply recognizing, accepting, and validating the ministry which her Lord has provided for her.

In consecrating our lives to the service of the Lord, the church is not merely assuring the proper care of parochial duties. It is even an exaggeration to say that it "makes" ministers: it recognizes and confirms the vocation which God has addressed to a man, and it engages itself to receive him and treat him as an envoy from the Lord. No more than men were able to make Jesus the Messiah, but only to recognize Him as such, nor to make the Bible the normative Word of God, but only to recognize it as such, nor to make the eucharistic bread the body of Christ, but only to recognize it as such—no more can they make a man an envoy of the Lord, but only recognize him as such.\*

II. Even within the New Testament period, however, it became necessary to divide some of the functions in the apostolic ministry. The sixth chapter of Acts, for example, records the creation of a group of deacons to relieve the apostles of certain responsibilities which, though they be-  
\*J. J. von Allman in *Verbum Caro*, 35/36, pp. 118-119 (translation mine).

longed to the apostolic office, made the apostolic task too burdensome. In the passage from St. Paul which we have already quoted, four offices (prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) are mentioned together with the apostles. Later on in the pastoral epistles we find both presbyters and bishops.

A good many efforts have been made to reduce this variety of offices to a single pattern; episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational. But from the confusing variety of offices mentioned in the New Testament, not to mention the bewildering profusion in the subapostolic age, it seems more likely to conclude that while each church preserved the apostolic ministry, each church divided the responsibilities of that ministry as its needs required. The important thing was not the number of offices, but the apostolic ministry itself.

Thus, our own Reformed Church, following Calvin, has established a four-fold ministry of teachers (professors of theology), ministers, elders and deacons. But, as is well known, Calvin had no objection, under well-defined conditions, to the creation of a fifth office, that of superintendent; and in at least one of the Reformed Churches, that of Hungary, such an office has long existed. Here we differ markedly from those in the Episcopal Church who insist upon the divine gift not only of the ministry, but of the ministry in its three-fold form. We should accept the first, but regard the second as merely the result of temporal necessities. If tomorrow our Church should decide that it was more advantageous to have a seven-fold ministry, there could be no objection in principle.

That last remark, of course, needs the constant qualification that all of the offices created must be divisions of the apostolic ministry. It is for this reason, for example, that the Reformed Church has never recognized the office of trustee. Trustees may have important secular work, but they can by no stretch of the imagination be made a division of the apostolic ministry. Hence they have no place in a church order. But should the Reformed Church in the future decide to create an office of deaconess or of catechist, there could be no objection. The earliest ministry of the Reformed Church in this country, for example, was that of *krankenbezoeker*, visitor of the sick. This office has completely disappeared from the Reformed Church, probably because the conditions of a large colonial empire which called it into being have disappeared. But who can deny that while it existed, it formed a valid part of the apostolic ministry of the Reformed Church?

This discussion of the division of offices leads to two further observations. We need to bear in mind that the two offices of elder and deacon in the Reformed Church are not jobs of church management, but ministries. They ought to involve a vocation and a call just as much as they

involve an ordination. The writer knows of one man who has persistently refused to become an elder because he strongly believes in his vocation to the diaconate. That is as it should be. In our Church at present there is a growing feeling that the offices of elder and deacon are purely secular trusteeships—like being on a board of directors. Every step should be taken to correct that impression and to remind those who have been ordained to the office of elder and deacon that they have part in the apostolic ministry. It is to be feared that our practice of rotation, while having much to be said for it, encourages the secular aspect of the offices, for, after all, ministries do not rotate! They are vocations.

A second observation concerns what may be called a growing tendency to confuse the offices. This tendency is manifest in a variety of ways. One often hears it said, for example, that "an elder and a minister are the same thing." Now to be sure such an idea was worked out in English Puritanism, but it has no place in the Reformed Church. One has merely to read the two services of ordination in our *Liturgy* to realize that elders and ministers are very different things. This is not to say that one is better than another or that one is holier than another. Such distinctions have no place in the Reformed Church. But there is certainly a marked difference in function which is obscured every time an elder pretends he is a minister or a minister acts as an elder.

A second illustration of this confusion is found in the modern layman's movement. On Layman's Sunday the pulpit is occupied by members of the congregation who deliver the sermon. And often such a practice is saluted on the ground that it shows that the layman has reached Christian maturity; he can even preach (and sometimes better than the domine!) Well, actually it shows nothing so much as a complete misunderstanding of the Reformed doctrine of the ministry!

Make no mistake about it! The layman has a real ministry to perform and we should rejoice in his awakening to it. He even has sermons to preach—but not in the pulpit on Sunday. His pulpit is in the office, the factory, the farm, the school during the week, in the hundred and one places where he is daily where the minister has no access or where, if he did come, he would be heard only casually. The Church is functioning not when the layman can take the minister's place, but when he takes his own place and does his apostolic witnessing in the place where he is called to do it.

In fact, it could be said that one of the weaknesses of the Church is that too often the minister has had to do the work of the layman who has, as everybody recognizes, too often been a passive spectator. Every member of Christ's Church has his share in the apostolic task—his ministry, if



one wishes to call it that. But the place in which it is to be exercised is mostly outside the four walls of the Church.

Once again, it needs to be said that such a conception involves no judgments of value or importance. As the apostle says, the hand cannot do without the eye nor the ear without the feet. One is just as important as the other. If it is to live and flourish, the body of Christ needs them all. And when each one, from layman to professor of theology, does his work, the body will be healthy.

III. The various offices of the ministry preserve their character only in use, only when they are set in a living relationship with the body of Christ. While that statement is not directly made in any of our standards, it is clearly implied in the whole Reformed attitude to Church and Sacraments. In Holy Communion, for example, the bread and wine retain their significance only during the actual celebration of the Sacrament. After that, they are merely bread and wine. In the service God has used them to reveal His Son; but when the service is ended, they retain no magical or sacred character.

That the ministry is to be similarly regarded is evidenced by two things. The first is the great difficulty which the Church, as early as the Synod of Dort, had with the problem of aged ministers who were no longer able to perform their duties. Our earliest Church order, the Post-Acta of the Synod of Dort, insists that they must be retained as ministers of the congregation, even in an *emeritus* status. The reason is not hard to see. Only in some relationship to the body of Christ could they retain their office of minister of the Word.

A more striking proof is to be found in the real reluctance which the Church has shown to ordain a man to the ministry who has no call. There can be no doubt that the time has come when this reluctance needs to be reviewed, at least so far as what constitutes a "call", is concerned. For our modern situation presents us with all kinds of needs for the ministry beyond those of the typical congregation.

But at the same time, this reluctance has a healthy basis. For from the Reformed point of view, there is no ministry apart from some manifestation of the body of Christ. A Roman Catholic priest may perform his ministry at an altar in an empty Church. But such a concept is unthinkable from the Reformed point of view. Our idea of the ministry implies a congregation, for it is what Daniel Jenkins has called a "ministry in function."

That concept of the "ministry in function" also explains the rather lofty claims that are made for the various offices of the ministry in the *Liturgy*. For example, no Roman Catholic document could claim anything more for its priest than



Remember that God Himself speaketh unto you and beseecheth you through him. Receive the word which he, according to the Scripture, shall preach unto you, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. (p. 70)

At first sight, these are enormous claims, not to be exceeded, if they are seriously intended, by the papal claim to infallibility! Every word in a sermon the Word of God! But we are not speaking about some holy man with a magical character bestowed on him in the rite of ordination. We are speaking about the ministry in function. As a man, the minister is a sinner, subject to all the pressures and ambiguities of our contemporary situation. But as a preacher, God uses him to be a bearer of the eternal Word.

Perhaps it should be pointed out that this promise is not without its important qualification. It is not true, for example, that every time a minister stands in the pulpit to say whatever comes into his head, he is speaking the Word of God. The phrase "according to the Scripture" is the important one. Here, once again, we return to the apostolic witness of which the Scriptures are the record. Whenever the minister proclaims Jesus Christ from the pulpit, God will see to it that His Word will not return to Him void, but will accomplish that whereto He has sent it. That word will find its lodgement in the hearts of the hearers and work its mission of redemption.

Such a concept also explains why the Constitution of our Church allows a minister to demit his office and return to the status of a layman. To be sure, his action must be approved by the Classis and be taken in an orderly way. But we know nothing of a "character *indelibilis*" as the Roman Catholics, whose priests retain the power of the priesthood even after they have ceased to use it. When a minister has retired, the situation is different; he will still exercise his ministry, even if occasionally. But when a man gives up the ministry, he is no longer a minister of the Word since the ministry is in function only. The classical recognition is just that—recognition. Classes can no more unmake ministers than they can make them.

In conclusion we may point out what the Reformed Church has to say to each of the three theories of the ministry, presbyterian, congregational, and episcopal. First, as to the presbyterian view, it may seem strange that we should have anything to say since we are normally considered presbyterians. Governmentally speaking, we are. But with regard to the ministry, there are some differences. For one thing, we cannot accept the common presbyterian identification of minister and elder. The basic concept is not the presbyter, but the apostolic ministry, the functions of which can be divided in any number of ways.

We can appreciate the congregational insistence on the relationship of the minister to the congregation. But we cannot accept the idea that the ministry is a creation of the congregation. The ministry must be in relation to a congregation (or to some manifestation of the body of Christ) but it is neither made by the congregation nor, in the deepest sense, responsible to it. It is Christ's gift and its responsibilities are to Him.

We can accept the Episcopal insistence on the episcopal office as part of the ministry. For both *Constitution* and *Liturgy* acknowledge the office of bishop as part of the work of the ministry. Under certain circumstances, we could even accept the creation of superintendents as an office of the ministry. But we cannot accept the diocesan episcopate as absolutely necessary to the existence of the Church nor the contention that the three-fold offices of bishops, priests (presbyters), and deacons are required by the New Testament. And certainly we cannot acknowledge that in rejecting the diocesan episcopate (or superintendent) at the Reformation, the Reformed Church thereby deprived itself of a valid ministry.

A ministry which is divinely given, Christ's gift to His Church, capable of division and delegation as circumstances may require, exercised in function—these are the main points in a Reformed doctrine of the ministry.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not . . . . For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake . . . . But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (II Corinthians 3:18; 4:1, 5, 7)

## THE MINISTER IN THE ROLE OF COUNSELOR

ROBERT F. DE HAAN

That Christians are subject to personal and social maladjustment is a matter of common observation. Ministers are continually called upon to deal with the corroding effects of anxiety, hostility, jealousy, fear, and animosity in the lives of their parishioners. As his congregants file past him at the close of a Sunday morning service a minister may expect that approximately one out of twelve either has already experienced rather severe mental upset or will experience it in the future.

A minister, for instance, can expect some time in his career to be called to the phone to answer a distraught husband who tells of his wife's strange behavior, the voices she hears directing her to leave home, her refusal to eat food because she believes it is poisoned, her suspicions, her bizarre actions toward her children, her rapidly deteriorating behavior.

A young woman, Miss Brown, recently came to me with a problem a minister also is likely to meet. She was oppressed with the burden of her past sins. Now that she was engaged to be married she found her earlier sexual experiences crowding in on her conscience. She did not know if she should tell her fiance nor how to do it. She was worried that he would not continue to love her once he found out. She doubted if God would forgive her. She was completely confused and shaken.

Or the minister may find himself talking to a middle-aged man such as Mr. Smith, who began to experience heart palpitations, indigestion, uncontrollable trembling, inability to stay at his job, and long periods of depression. Further conversations revealed that the man's mother died a short time ago. He expressed complete loss of interest in life since then. His wife was apprehensive and resentful and sent him to talk with his pastor about his problems.

These samples are taken from the spectrum of human problems that confront the pastor. How should he approach such problems? What is the role of the minister of the gospel as a psychological counselor or psychotherapist in dealing with the social and emotional problems of his parishioners?

Before attempting to answer these questions it is desirable to define some of the terms we have used so far and will continue to use throughout this article and to indicate their relationship to the technical terminology in the field of psychology.

Counseling and psychotherapy designate the interpersonal relationship between the minister, psychologist or counselor and the person who has come for help. Counseling, in distinction from psychotherapy, usually refers to the treatment of persons with relatively mild problems of mental health. It covers a number of activities such as giving advice about specific matters of daily living, allowing the person to talk out his problems, giving him encouragement and support to carry on. Psychotherapy usually refers to the treatment of deeply disturbed persons. Psychotherapy is generally more intensive and prolonged than counseling. Psychotherapy refers to emergency measures for mental ill health and to dealing with chronic and severe cases. The distinction between the terms counseling and psychotherapy, however, is not a hard and fast one and at times they are used interchangeably.

The minister should leave intensive psychotherapy of severely disturbed persons to the professional psychologist and psychiatrist or to the family doctor, unless the minister is specifically trained to help such persons. Psychotherapy is a specialized field of endeavor. It requires long training to develop proficiency in it and continued practice to maintain that proficiency. The minister can probably deal most effectively with mild cases of emotional ill health and with preventive mental health.

Neurosis is the more technical term for emotional ill health, maladjustments and severe personal problems. In general, a neurotic condition indicates that the person has not learned adequately to handle his conflicts and anxieties. A maladjusted or neurotic person is unhappy, tense, conflictual. His social effectiveness and his vocational adequacy as well as his spiritual life are probably impaired by his mental difficulties.

The psychotic person is considered by some authorities to be qualitatively different from the neurotic individual. The psychotic person may not experience as much mental anguish as the neurotic person, but his problems are much more severe. In the psychoses there is loss of contact with the surrounding world. Psychotics cannot manage their own lives and hence must be placed under restraint and constant care.

Let us now return to the discussion of what is involved in the role of the psychological counselor and how it relates to the role of the Gospel minister. I think the role of the counselor is supplementary to and necessary to the role of the Gospel minister. I do not see how a minister can avoid working with both the personal-social dimension and the spiritual dimension, if he is to be effective in either one. There is a constant interaction between the role of the counselor and the role of the preacher, making them complementary to the total function of the minister. Although there is a basic difference between the two roles, they are in no sense antithetical.

I Corinthians 12 gives the Biblical teaching of the role of the counselor, I believe. In that chapter we read that when one member of the body of Christ suffers, all the members suffer, particularly if they are living in close spiritual fellowship to God and to each other. We read further that within the same body of Christ, as represented by the community of believers, are deposited different gifts and operations of the Spirit of God. That is, different members have different capacities to carry on the functions of the body and to cope with the problems that obtain in the body of Christ. One of these capacities is the gift of healing. I believe the healing of mental suffering is one aspect of this gift. The minister is a key member in carrying out this ministry of healing, either personally or through others, since he is spiritually closer to more parishioners than any other one member and is in better position to observe when members begin to suffer from mental disorders.

In dealing with such problems, the minister, I believe, must develop what might be called the *therapeutic approach* to problems of human relations among his parishioners. This might also be called the "healing approach" to their lives. The therapeutic approach consists of certain attitudes, understandings and skills which will be discussed in the following pages.

#### THE THERAPEUTIC ATTITUDE

The therapeutic attitude is expressed first of all in the desire of the minister to establish and maintain a helping relationship with his people. He reaches out to them, listens to their problems and demonstrates his willingness to deal with their psychological problems. A pastor with a therapeutic attitude does not find it necessary to hold others at a distance through officiousness, hearty good will, theological approach to problems, or a condemnatory implication in what he says. Impatience, unavailability, lack of easy privacy in counseling, readily communicate to the parishioner that the desire to enter into the necessary close helping relationships is lacking.

This desire must be coupled with an expression of compassion and mercy for persons in distress, even when their own foolishness or sinfulness got them into the straits in which they find themselves. Psychologists call this expression of compassion the *need to nurture*: a giving of oneself to others; a desire to help friends when they are in trouble, to treat others with kindness and sympathy, to forgive them, to assist others who are less fortunate, to show affection to them.

A minister with a therapeutic attitude also values the individuality and personal growth of his parishioners. Many times the pastor will be tempted to allow persons to become dependent upon him as the counselor. This is especially true when the parishioners (and the minister) confuse the

authoritative role of the preacher with the counseling role of the pastor. The minister must not underestimate the potential of the average person in his church to work out his personal and social problems without being told authoritatively how to do so. In a great majority of the cases, the minister needs but to help the person see the issues, clarify the questions in his mind; the direction of action that the parishioner should take will often become evident to him as a result.

A minister with a therapeutic attitude is also aware of what is going on inside of himself. Psychologists call this self-awareness *intreception*: to be able to perceive and analyze one's own motives and feelings, to understand how others feel about problems, to put oneself in another's place, to judge people by *why* they do things rather than *what* they do. It is clear that a minister who is unaware of his own motivations and feelings will find it difficult to enter into other lives and understand what is going on in the wellsprings of their being.

#### Therapeutic Understanding and Knowledge

The role of the counselor consists not only of attitudes and desires to help people who are in distress; it is also based upon knowledge of a body of facts about human behavior. It is to the content of such therapeutic understanding and knowledge that we now turn our attention.

It is important that a person who would help others in their personal and social living should have a general knowledge of human development. This is particularly true in the area of preventive mental health, I believe. The grasp of this field will help the minister as a counselor to sort out the problems which are simply transitory developmental problems from those which have other origins in deeper unhealthy conditions. Such knowledge is important for the minister in working with parents in his congregation. For example, very young children, after they have learned the basic skills of walking and talking, often enter into what is termed a "negative" phase. Parents are often at their wits' end during such times, particularly with their first children. A minister can do much to ease their minds by telling them that this is a passing stage and that the negativism is not necessarily a reflection of total depravity or of poor training by the parents. Parents are well advised when they are told to be consistent, firm, and yet withal, relaxed during this phase.

Another area of general human development should be thoroughly grasped by the minister who wishes to counsel his parishioners. This area is the role of the peer group, especially in the lives of children in the pre-adolescent and adolescent age groups. During adolescence, young people begin to feel their own independence. They begin to break away from their family and move into the adult world. Stress and strain usually

accompany this normal stage of development. A pastor can once more be of assistance to distraught parents by helping them to understand this important period in the lives of their children and by counseling them to be patient and firm during this time, and to spend time listening to their children's problems, and at the same time allowing them more independence. A pastor can help adolescents and parents pass through this period without psychological wounds and scars.

The dynamics of family life is another extremely important area of human development. A pastor who can see and deal with the psychological dimensions of family living will be able to be of great assistance to his parishioners. One of the important things for a minister to know is that in dealing with a family problem, he must encompass at least two and sometimes three generations. If the husband and wife misunderstand each other for example, the pastor must deal with the effects of this problem not only upon the husband and wife but also upon the following generation of children in the family. He must also work backward a generation and explore the origins of the problem of the husband and wife in the lives of their own parents.

Parents sometimes unconsciously use their children as foils to hurt each other. One family was referred to me because of the misbehavior of their children in school and because the wife was apparently becoming upset by this. In talking with the husband and wife it became clear that in the early years of their marriage the wife had completely dominated the husband. She outthought him and outmaneuvered him in every way. When children came to the couple, the husband found that his quiet but more winning ways took hold with the children. He stole their hearts with kindness and generosity and soon won them to his side. As the children grew older, he was able to turn them against their mother on almost every issue that was raised between them. With his children as his allies, he was able to control the woman who had dominated him for so many years. He did so with a vengeance. The misbehavior of the children in school was merely a side effect of the larger drama.

The minister will also find that understanding the field of dynamic psychology will be of tremendous help to him in dealing with people who come to him for help. Dynamic psychology provides a way of thinking about human behavior that departs from the ordinary rules of logic and ethics. In this mode of thinking, behavior is seen as neither moral nor immoral, right nor wrong, logical nor illogical. Rather it is looked at functionally and the key question becomes, "What purpose or function does this behavior serve in the life of the person?" The father's behavior described above, for instance, was both immoral and illogical. It served the function, however, of protecting himself from his wife's psychological



domination. The minister as counselor should be aware of this latter aspect of his behavior.

By thinking in this dynamic manner, it soon becomes clear that a good deal of behavior of neurotically maladjusted people is unconscious. That is, they do things for reasons of which they are unaware. The father, for instance, was not conscious of his vicious resentment of his wife. He vigorously justified himself as protecting his children from her domination. Christians who are able to see and accept, with the help of the pastor, their unconscious motivations are probably ready to be helped by the ordinary pastor. If they deny or repress their unconscious traits, however, they probably need more intensive professional psychotherapy than a minister can provide.

Dynamic psychology also emphasizes the symbolic nature of behavior. For example, Jim and Jane, two young people, came to me to talk about the interpersonal problem they were encountering as the date for their marriage drew closer. In the course of talking with them, it became apparent that marriage symbolized two different things to them. To be sure they both understood the Christian concept of marriage. Underneath this concept, however, Jane perceived marriage as the only way to escape from a dominating, grasping mother, who was trying to live out her frustrated life through her daughter. Jane was literally fleeing into marriage. Jim, on the other hand, saw marriage as a normal, healthy expression of his manhood. The more he experienced the desperateness with which Jane pushed ahead with the marriage plans, the more fearful he became. The more fearful and hesitant he became, the more desperate became Jane's efforts to complete the marriage. Until they both understood the symbolic meaning of marriage at the dynamic level, they were unable to approach marriage from a common psychological point of view.

Pastors need to understand the importance of anxiety or diffuse fear in the lives even of Christians. All neurotic behavior may profitably be viewed as a defense against the painful effects of anxiety. The defenses are sometimes extremely elaborate and almost impenetrable. The origins of anxiety are not always easy to disentangle. Whatever the causes, anxiety has the effect of preventing the person from trying out new experiences which could help him learn or relearn more adequate behavior. Mr. Smith, whose anxious behavior was described earlier in this article, spent his entire life being anxious and fearful whenever he was uncertain of the reaction of his mother to his present or planned behavior. Much of his energy was tied up in keeping "in tune" with her. She in turn fostered this overdependent relationship of her son for dynamic reasons of her own. As a result, Mr. Smith never learned to take important independent actions. When his mother died, his anxiety rose to new levels because he



now faced decisions that he had never before faced without her sustaining help.

Anxiety in one form or another is woven into the fabric of almost every form of maladjustment. The wise pastor will watch for its appearance in the way his parishioners defend themselves from situations that might threaten their psychological equilibrium.

The minister as a counselor should also understand the phenomena of rapport and transference. These two phenomena are closely related but have quite different effects. Rapport refers to the nature of the relationship between the counselor and the counselee. Where rapport is good, the counselee feels accepted by the minister who is counseling him; he feels free to explore any phase of his life, no matter how painful. He feels that the minister understands him and is not threatened by any implied or real critical attitude of the minister. This is a healthy, therapeutic relationship. It is doubtful if any therapy can take place unless the minister establishes rapport with the counselee.

Transference also refers to the relationship between the two but goes much deeper than rapport. When transference occurs, the counselee becomes strongly attached to the minister. The counselee assumes an attitude of complete dependence upon him. The attachment is so strong that it resembles an infantile attachment of a child to his father. The psychoanalytic school depends heavily on transference for beneficial effects of therapy, on the ground that by working through the transference relationship with his psychoanalyst the patient is vicariously working through his infantile relationship with his father, which relationship presumably is one of the most important in any person's life.

A minister venturing into counseling must be prepared to deal effectively with strong feelings on the part of his parishioner to him as a counselor. The discussion of transference brings us to the last area of understanding in which the pastor should have some sophistication, namely, his own limits in the role of counselor.

In order to understand the course of counseling and therapy, the minister must have a good deal of insight into his own unconscious needs and motivations, since these may prove to be the biggest limitation to his work as a counselor. A minister who is unaware of his own needs and feelings toward the different kinds of people with whom he deals has large blind spots in his psychological vision and is likely to make many systematic mistakes in counseling. It is not unlikely, for example, that a minister will find himself attractive to emotionally starved women, married or not. He needs to be aware of his own reactions to them and be able to accept and understand his feelings toward them so that he is neither panicked nor upset by his own feelings.

One pastor was called upon many times for counseling by a prominent woman in his congregation. She poured out the disappointments in her married life to him. She discovered in him a sympathetic listener; he found in her a person who responded to his counseling efforts. After a time, however, the woman demurred at making the long trip to his office and suggested he see her in her home. Not to inconvenience her, he made arrangements to continue counseling her in her home since he occasionally had to be in that neighborhood anyhow. Such a tactical mistake in counseling immediately took the relationship off the therapeutic plane and placed it on a personal, compromising one. The mistake had its origin in the minister's lack of awareness of the sexual overtones even in his counseling relationship to the woman.

A most obvious kind of understanding that a pastor should possess is the knowledge of differences among mildly neurotic, severely neurotic, and psychotic behavior. He does not need to become a psychiatric diagnostician. He needs to be able to recognize, however, when a person is out of touch with reality and unable to take care of himself. Furthermore, he needs to know how to refer such a person for psychiatric help, either through the family doctor or a Christian psychiatrist.

Reading some of the more important literature in the field of psychology, psychiatry and pastoral counseling is important for the minister who would increase his psychological sophistication. Herein lies another limiting factor in the role of the minister as a counselor. Ministers are extremely busy people. Professional psychological writings are not always readily available to them. Hence they find it difficult to keep up even a minimum knowledge of the developing practices in the field of counseling. A short list of basic books in the field of pastoral counseling is given at the conclusion of this article for those who wish to increase their understanding of this aspect of their work.

#### THERAPEUTIC SKILLS

The role of the minister as a counselor can be described not only in terms of the attitudes that he must maintain or the knowledge that he must possess but also in terms of the skills, and the finesse that he brings to the counseling situation. The therapeutic skills are a culmination of his knowledge and attitudes.

It is important, for instance, for the minister not only to understand the nature of rapport but also to be able to initiate and maintain it. Rapport is maintained by very subtle and very powerful cues which the parishioner perceives in the behavior of the minister who is counseling him. The minister must communicate through many kinds of behavior that he accepts the person whom he is counseling. Acceptance means that the counselee is permitted to talk about anything and everything that is upon his heart

without being criticized or condemned for it. Obviously a person who feels that certain areas of his behavior will be condemned will avoid talking about those areas of behavior. If he cannot talk about them, however, it is difficult to see how he will be able to understand them and learn how to behave differently. Hence the skill in communicating acceptance is necessary in establishing and maintaining rapport.

Acceptance does not imply agreement. Rather it means to the counselee, "I understand what you are saying and can see your point of view although I do not necessarily feel it was the wisest or most desirable action that you took."

Another skill that a minister needs to develop in maintaining rapport is the ability to listen actively and understandingly. One of the most persistent mistakes made by busy ministers is that of trying to resolve the problems of their parishioners with hasty, pat answers. In many cases the parishioners are not seeking for a solution since the solution is obvious to them already. What they need is a patient listener who will help them probe their own feelings about the steps that they know they should take toward solving their problem.

Another important skill for the minister to develop is the ability to enter into the lives of those who come to him for help and at the same time to remain sufficiently objective to their lives to be able to bring new insights to bear upon their problem. Many maladjusted people use devious means to get the counselor either to agree or disagree with them. This is particularly true in family quarrels and marital problems. The minister who does not retain sufficient objectivity to their problem, soon finds himself a part of the quarrel rather than a neutral counselor. At the same time, he must draw close enough to those who need help for them to feel accepted and for them to want to come back to him for help, even though some of the insights he may communicate to them may be painful and difficult to accept. His deep interest in their lives, however, is the binding force which keeps them coming back for more help.

Another important set of related skills that a pastor should develop, is the ability to recognize feelings in others, the ability to point out these feelings and to interpret them to his counselees without unduly threatening them. We have already discussed how anxiety arises over the conflict of unacceptable, embarrassing or painful feelings. A minister must be able to recognize these feelings even when they are expressed in disguised form.

Jane, the young woman who was fleeing into marriage, for example, had repressed her feelings of fear and resentment toward her mother because she could not square them with her duty to honor and obey her mother. As long as she was unconscious of these negative feelings, she

continued to live in a state of anxious conflict over her relationship to her mother. When the counselor recognized and pointed out the fact of her fear and resentment of her mother, she was better able to see her mother more objectively and understand her relationship to her mother more clearly. This in turn provided a basis for her to understand her motivations in getting married and led her to develop more healthy motivations.

In this connection, it becomes extremely important for the minister to be aware of his own feelings. The more available his feelings are to his own consciousness, the fewer blind spots he will have and the fewer mistakes he will make in recognizing and correctly interpreting the feelings of others. A minister who still has unresolved conflicts and repressed feelings about his own parents, for example, would probably have a difficult time helping Jane recognize her own feelings toward her mother. A minister, like everyone else, has certain areas of his life in which there are unresolved conflicts. He should either get help in resolving them or refer people who come to him with such problems to other counselors who can handle them more objectively.

We have spoken previously of the strong feelings of dependency that a counselee may develop toward the pastor in the counseling relationship. Perhaps the most adequate way to handle such feelings of extreme dependency in transference is to treat them as any other feelings of which the counselee is unconscious. In short, a minister can recognize, point out, and interpret feelings of dependency toward himself just as he handled other unconscious feelings that the counselee expresses in the course of counseling.

Feelings of resentment and anxiety often hold the key to the conflicts of maladjusted persons. To be able to interpret and explain the feelings underlying the conflictual behavior of a counselee without threatening him thereby, is one of the most delicate tasks that a pastor is called to perform. To explain to a person why he acts as he does, requires broad knowledge, wide experience in dealing with human behavior and ability to synthesize many seemingly unrelated bits of behavior through their underlying unconscious feelings. Because of their training and convictions, ministers are likely to look for spiritual motivation underlying behavior. It is right that they should do so since parishioners expect this kind of help from them. Behavior has multiple causation, however, and every spiritual cause is also imbedded in a context of psychologically dynamic causation. The wisdom of the pastor is displayed in his understanding which of the many causes are the most important ones in any given case and in communicating these to the person who has come to him for help.

In the case of Miss Brown, described earlier in this article, for in-

stance, the spiritual aspects of her problem were in the forefront. She needed help, however, in understanding other aspects of her problem, such as the reasons for her earlier sexual experiences and her anxiety-laden relationship to her present fiancé. A persistent but unrecognized feeling that returned again and again in her life, was her own low estimation of herself as a person. Many of her earlier experiences and her present anxiety toward her fiancé could be seen as reactions to her unconscious feelings of inferiority as a person.

In interpreting the causes of behavior, as in dealing with the unconscious feelings of a counselee, a pastor must be aware of his own unconscious assumptions about behavior. A minister, for instance, may find himself interpreting the behavior of others in much the same way every time. He may see resentment, for example, in every person who comes to him for help. If this happens, he probably should begin to suspect that his own unconscious needs are entering into the way he selects and interprets facts in the behavior of others.

A very practical matter should be pointed out at this time. It is important for a minister who wishes to counsel his parishioners to have a neutral private office in which he may meet those who come to him for help. The pastor's study in his parsonage leaves much to be desired as a counseling office. A simple office in the church, where persons can come unobtrusively and leave without having to face others is ideal for this purpose.

#### THE SPIRITUAL BENEFITS GROWING OUT OF COUNSELING

Although counseling and psychotherapy are not the means of spiritual salvation, they often make a previously maladjusted person permeable to the Gospel by reducing and in some cases removing psychological barriers to effective communication of the Gospel. The beneficial effects of therapy can be illustrated by the case of the middle-aged man, Mr. Ranson. He was referred to me by his minister, who said that Mr. Ranson had been caught that afternoon by his daughter in the very act of hanging himself. I spent many extended sessions with Mr. Ranson, actively listening to his tale of woe. The man was depressed and demoralized. He had recently lost his job. He was deeply concerned about the behavior of his son, who was away in the army. His church attendance had become very irregular of late. He interspersed his story with long periods of silence in which he was thinking deeply about the problems.

The following Sunday he went to church for the first time in several weeks. On the next day he returned to me saying that he felt well enough now to be on his own once more. He then recounted what a blessing he had received at the Sunday church service. For the first time in months he had been relaxed enough to listen to the minister's preach-

ing. His conflicts and anxieties had been resolved to the point where the Gospel could get through to him and make an impression on him. As a result, he felt a spiritual quickening in his life, and from that point, his spiritual as well as his personal and social life revived.

#### THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL

The Word of God has power, not only to save souls and make them right with God but also to change lives on the horizontal, human plane. The healing effect of the Gospel lies in its ability to counteract anxiety and to bring relief from fear. The Gospel brings the love of God in Christ to men. It offers free pardon from sin and relief from the guilt of sin. The Gospel provides outlets for new kinds of action and service. Such benefits not only restore mental health but they also prevent ill health.

Christian fellowship also has healing effects on men's minds. A person can find love and security in the communion of believers that helps him overcome many emotional and social problems. A case in point was a young woman who was brought into the fellowship of a small country church through an evangelistic meeting in a nearby town. At first she was exceedingly difficult to live with. She was critical of the simple people in the church. She was tense and haughty. At times her actions bordered on the psychotic. For more than a year the pastor of the church and the members of the congregation encouraged her to be one of them. They invited her into all the activities of the church. The minister spent countless hours with her, explaining the Gospel, unfolding the meaning of a sanctified life to her and interpreting the life of the church. She could not resist the love that was tendered her by young and old in the congregation, who sensed that she needed a special display of Christian affection. Gradually her behavior relaxed, and almost in spite of herself, she began to reach out to others and to return the affection that was given her.

Most Christian churches need a richer and fuller Christian fellowship and a more effective gospel ministry, in order to make the therapeutic effects felt. More effective methods of teaching catechism and Sunday School, more challenging curriculum and more meaningful programs, are among the most crying needs of Christian churches. Perhaps we need fewer formal church meetings and more informal ones. I believe Christians should eat together, pray together, and sing together more than they do. Such activities provide unparalleled opportunities for Christian fellowship that are truly therapeutic. Informal meals at the church, in which entire families participate, work projects among men, cottage prayer meetings, hymn sings in the home, are important ways for Christians to have fellowship. Through these means, the healing effect of Christian fellowship and the Gospel will be felt among members who need this healing and restoration of their mental health.

### BASIC BOOKS ON PASTORAL COUNSELING

Bergston, Göte, *Pastoral Psychology, A Study in the Care of Souls*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951. This is a penetrating, scholarly treatment of the problems of pastoral psychology from a point of view that is most in harmony with Reformed theology.

Goulouze, William, *Pastoral Psychology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950. Here is practically the only contribution to the problems of pastoral counseling from the Reformed ministry. It is a helpful overview of important problems in the field.

Hiltner, Seward, *Pastoral Counseling*, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949. This book presents a thorough discussion of pastoral counseling from the "inner release" approach to human nature best typified in the work of Carl Rogers. It is an important book for a pastor to study.

Hulme, William E., *Counseling and Theology*, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956. This is a presentation of a sound evangelical approach to problems of counseling in relation to theology.

Oates, Wayne E., *Religious Factors in Mental Illness*. New York: Association Press, 1955. Here is a helpful book which illuminates many problems of mental health which a pastor is likely to encounter. The last chapter clarifies some of the problems that ministers and psychiatrists face in working together.

White, Robert W., *The Abnormal Personality*, New York: Ronald Press, 1956. This is one of the best basic textbooks in abnormal psychology. It gives particularly lucid descriptions of the nature and development of the major mental ailments.



## REFORMED! FROM WHAT?

ELTON M. EENIGENBURG

A puzzled expression has greeted more than one home missions worker who, going from door to door in a new American community, has just announced that he represents "The Reformed Church in America." The puzzled look seems to be saying something like, "Reformed Church! I never heard of *that* church. Reformed from what?" Some, not hearing the -ed in Reformed, have concluded that this church might be related in some way to "reform schools."

It is little wonder that the average American has not become acquainted with the word "Reformed" in church matters. Not only is the denomination located in relatively few geographical areas of the United States, in none of these areas is she the dominant religious body. If one had lived for any length of time in cities like Grand Rapids, Michigan or Paterson, N. J., he would no doubt have encountered at least the name of the Reformed Church. But most Americans have not lived in the few cities where the name has some significance. Recently several Reformed churches were organized in one area of Florida, but in all the remainder of the South there are none, with the exception of a small number developed in connection with mission stations. The Far West can boast about two score. The great majority are concentrated in a number of states in the North, principally in Iowa, Michigan, New York, and New Jersey. It is to be expected, then, that most Americans have never had reason to be aware of the existence of the Reformed Church in America.

There is the numerical factor also. The *Yearbook of American Churches for 1958* gives the inclusive membership of the denomination as 208,999 persons, with 845 churches. In size she ranks thirty-second among Protestant churches in the country. There are several other denominations using the name Reformed, but all of them together represent a very small segment of American Protestantism. Of much larger significance are the Presbyterians, who are very similar in many ways to the Reformed, the Baptists, the Methodists, the Lutherans, and a number of others.

It is more than a bit odd that the Reformed Church in America can boast no better statistics than these, especially when she has been known as the oldest Protestant denomination in America "with a continuous history." There are various reasons for this seemingly slow growth, some of them good, and some not so good. For the present it will suffice to



observe that relatively small denominations must expect to remain relatively unknown. The case will be quite otherwise with the large denominations.

#### ORIGIN OF THE REFORMED NAME

The name "Reformed" did not originate, of course, with the Reformed Church in America, nor with any of the other Reformed bodies in this country. Its origin is to be found in the great Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Sometimes the term has been used to include all the churches which accepted the principles of the Reformation, but in a more accurate sense it refers to those churches which followed the teachings of the Reformers in Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. When Calvin's influence became dominant, the terms Calvinist and Reformed were often used interchangeably. This was not, however, until after the famed Colloquy at Poissy, France, where Theodore Beza, Calvin's friend and successor, ably defended the Calvinistic creed in the presence of Roman Catholic dignitaries and the French court. This conference took place in 1561, at a time when the French Huguenots, or Calvinists, were fighting for their very lives. From that time on the Calvinists in Europe, and in England and Scotland, were known as the Reformed Church. This title served to distinguish them from the other main group of Protestants, the Lutherans.

#### REFORMATION DEMANDS CHANGE

Failure to agree on a few points of doctrine kept the Lutherans and the Reformed from uniting their forces in that embattled century. Unity would have given the Protestant cause a good deal more strength; there were times when she sorely needed it. The two were completely united, however, in the high purpose of achieving genuine reformation of the church, and both knew that reformation demanded thorough changes in doctrine and life. Both reform movements had begun with the resolve to secure these changes by working for them *within* the Roman Catholic Church. When it became clear that that church had no intention of tolerating such reformatory efforts, the reformers found it necessary to start out on their own. They did not leave the Roman Church voluntarily. They were cast out.

#### THE MORAL CHANGE NEEDED

The Reformers were convinced that a thoroughgoing change was needed in both the theory and practice of the moral life. Everyone knows that in the centuries prior to the Reformation moral conditions in the Catholic Church were unspeakably bad. This fact is freely admitted by many Catholic historians. Gross immorality was the order of the day for large numbers, both among the clergy and the laity. Some of the popes, and many cardinals, bishops, priests, and monks kept mistresses and fathered illegi-

timate children. In most of the Catholic countries this was the rule, not the exception. Innumerable nuns also broke their vows of perpetual chastity. Naturally there was much revulsion and disgust on the part of multitudes of lay people because of these irregularities among their "spiritual" leaders. The shepherds being what they were, it is no wonder many of the sheep went astray.

In a way lay people could claim some justification for their own poor conduct. So very few around them were setting the proper example. But they were able to plead something else, something in the Catholic theory of the good life. It was to the effect that God did not require from all his people the same, serious striving for the perfect life. They distinguished between the "precepts of the Gospel," the commandments all must keep in order to attain to eternal life, and the "evangelical counsels," the higher degrees of conduct which go beyond what the commandments require. One might, for example, marry, keep the precepts and inherit eternal life. But if one took the vow of chastity and did not marry, at that point he lived by the "evangelical counsel," he earned for himself additional merit, and in a better and quicker way attained the end of eternal felicity. The "counsels" were usually three: poverty, chastity, and obedience. They were well fitted for the Catholic clergy, especially for those who followed the monastic life.

The Reformers rejected the notion that God looks for rather complete perfection from some people, and something inferior to that from others. When Jesus said, "Be ye perfect," He meant it for all God's people. Anything short of the perfect in thought, word, or deed was sin, and required repentance. God would forgive, but the sinner must seek constant improvement. The Christian will never be satisfied with himself, knowing that he continually falls short of the perfection required of him. He is confident, however, that he will some day be made perfect, fully formed in the likeness of Christ. Meanwhile he continues in hope, and daily he looks to his Lord for the supply of his grace, without which he could in no way please God.

It is plain that the Catholic theory was no great help to the average layman. God did not require the highest attainment from him, and therefore why should he seek it? All God asked was that a person live by the specific commandments of the Scripture. This could be done without any great striving, and for the most part it involved an avoidance of certain things, rather than a doing of something. It goes without saying that the Reformers found it necessary to reject the Catholic idea of special or superfluous merits. Christians did not acquire merits by doing good "beyond the call of duty." Even when they did their very best, they were still "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10).

Immorality was not, of course, the only evil that plagued the Catholic Church in head and members in the centuries prior to the Reformation. The whole catalog of human failing and misconduct seemed to be involved. As one might expect, the love of money had a good deal to do with it. The church had become enormously rich, possessing the greater part of the wealth of countries like France, Germany, and Italy. Much of her property and other riches she had acquired legally, but it was no comfort for the rulers of those countries to see the income from these possessions flowing to Rome, "in a thousand streamlets," as a recent writer put it.

In the interests of maintaining this vast, wealthy empire, the church secured for the offices of bishop and cardinal, in a good many instances, men of wealth, influence, and power, rather than men of Christian piety. Some of them functioned as both civil and ecclesiastical rulers. It was typical of such persons to live with little moral restraint and in princely luxury. Church offices, low and high, were regularly sold to the highest bidder. This practice was called simony. It was bitterly attacked, not only by the Protestant Reformers, but by reformers within the Catholic Church.

Bribery was the order of the day in matters of ecclesiastical appointment. Even priests had to pay bribes to superiors to secure ordination, and many men paid enormous sums to secure the office of cardinal. Some popes went so far as to create new offices or jobs for the sole purpose of collecting generous fees for their sale. A practice called pluralism developed through the centuries. One man would receive the income from several church offices, even though such persons often lived at considerable distance from their appointments. No actual work or service was done in connection with these offices. Having secured them by fair means or foul, their owners enjoyed whatever income they could be made to yield. Simony, bribery, and pluralism were but a few of the evils attendant upon the administration of the Catholic Church in the pre-Reformation period. Another one, the sale of indulgences, we shall mention in another connection. We have said enough on this point to make clear that if a tree is known by its fruits, the tree of the Catholic Church was in poor shape indeed.

#### THEOLOGY MUST BE CORRECTED

Even though a thorough moral reformation was required, this factor in itself had little to do with the origin of the Protestant Reformation. If it had been only a case of bad morals, the church would probably have found ways to improve them. Time and again in the medieval centuries reformers had risen from among the Catholics themselves to offer solutions of one kind or another for the prevailing ills. Though some of them seemed to make considerable progress for a while, defeat and failure inevitably came

to destroy high aspirations and bold schemes. The Reformers quickly saw that the evils of the day were the symptoms of a very real disease. To deal with the evils in themselves was like a doctor attempting to treat the spots which appear with measles or chicken pox. The nature of the disease itself must be discovered and then dealt with in thoroughgoing fashion. Only then would the symptoms tend to disappear.

The Catholic Church was sickly, in the estimation of the Reformers, mainly because her theology was so very wrong. Back of every bad practice was a mistaken belief or notion. This was true even of immorality in the sense that the guilty person found, in the clearly unbiblical sacrament of penance, a way out of his difficulty. Later we shall speak of this at greater length. It was not that Catholic theology was mistaken at just a few points. If that had been the case, the repair work necessary might have been a good deal easier.

To quote a phrase from the prophet Isaiah, the Protestant Reformers found "the whole head [was] sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there [was] no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores" (Isaiah 1:5, 6). The Reformers were realistic enough to know that evil morals and practices would never be entirely eliminated. They were confident, nevertheless, that given the help of God's grace, vast improvement could be made. But first there must come right thinking, thinking thoroughly in accord with the Bible, the Word of God. To this task they set themselves.

#### THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

Many Roman Catholic beliefs had to be given up because no authority for holding them could be found in the Bible. Some of them were the pope's office and authority; the meritoriousness of good works; indulgences; the veneration given the Virgin Mary, saints, and relics; five of the seven sacraments; the sacrifice of the mass; the dogma of transubstantiation; purgatory; prayers for the dead; auricular confession; the celibacy of the clergy; and the monastic system. We shall be noting the Protestant correction of these ideas in the greater part of the remainder of this essay.

The Reformers recognized, of course, that the church had to have her theology or systematic interpretation of the Bible, but nothing in the latter must contradict the letter or spirit of the Bible. Ancient creeds held by the Roman Catholics, like the Apostles' Creed, and those of Nicea and Chalcedon, were acceptable to the Protestants too, for each of them seemed to set forth one or more Biblical truths. The Bible was a revelation from God, and therefore its truths, embodied in different forms of expression, were not only supreme, but final. Creeds were the products of the ingenuity of men, and though they may have been very consecrated men, they were fallible also. Creeds could say how the Bible should be interpreted,

but if at any time they should be proved either wrong or inadequate, they ought to be amended or else given up. The church's theology, however expressed, was clearly secondary.

The Catholics did not hold that the Bible had spoken the final word in all matters of religion. Alongside the Bible they placed the unwritten tradition, and since its truths were said to have come from God through the words of Christ, or through the Apostles inspired by the Holy Spirit, they were of equal value and authority with those enunciated in the Holy Scriptures. In sum, tradition is that body of revealed truth which was not written down in the Scriptures. The Catholic Church, which is regarded as an infallible teaching body, defines through popes, general councils, and universal ordinary doctrine, which truths are embodied in the tradition. Already in the fifth century St. Vincent of Lerins laid down the threefold test of Catholicity: ecumenicity, antiquity, and consent ("what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all"). By these tests the church would be able to distinguish between true and false traditions.

Although the Catholic view held that the Bible and the tradition were of equal authority, the Reformers were convinced that in actual practice, tradition had greater weight than the Bible itself. It was not that Catholics set the one against the other, but that the Bible was regularly interpreted in the light of the later tradition. In this way the Scriptures were required to say what the tradition demanded for support and confirmation. It must be confessed that in the development of Protestant theology, the Bible has often been used in much the same way, to "prove," as it were, a system of theology or some peculiar doctrine. When this happens, we have bad Protestantism. The Reformers insisted that not only does the Bible have a unique place and dignity which it can share with no other, it alone can give us the truth of God. It is the only revelation we have.

The Catholic Church had taught her people that the infallible church was the only rightful interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. This work of interpretation had been done by popes and councils, and by other acceptable means. It was not necessary that the lay people read the Bible for themselves. Whatever was of benefit for them would be passed on to them in the regular channels. In contrast to this procedure, the Reformers were zealous to get the Bible into the hands of the people. It was translated into many tongues and the people were urged to read and study it for themselves. Interpreters were needed, for there were many things hard to understand. Many people had to be specially trained in the study and interpretation of the Bible, so that they might help others understand the Word. Even the Sunday School teacher in the smallest rural church is involved in this great task. Some, like professors of theology and ministers, have been required to study the original languages of the Scriptures, He-

brew and Greek, in order that they might interpret the Bible more expertly. But many others have been of immense assistance without that specialized training.

The Reformers knew, however, that no human being, however expert he became in the study of the Scriptures and in their interpretation, could become the high authority to whom all others must give way. Some have tried to usurp this right, but not for long. God alone is the ultimate authority, and it is by his Holy Spirit that the truths of the Bible are made convincingly real to the reader. Anyone at all who reads the Bible can say, "This is what the Bible says, for this is what I read. It is plainly set before me." But only the person to whom the Holy Spirit speaks can say, "This is the very truth of God and I must give heed to it." In other words, our human interpreters can help us greatly in comprehending the words and phrases of the Bible, and in that way help us to understand what is really written. In that limited way they become authorities of one sort or another. But the spiritual value and truth of any word or phrase is known only by what the Reformers called "the internal witness of the Holy Spirit." Only by this witness does one come to know the Bible as the very word of God. God thus ever remains Lord over his own Word.

If, as the Reformers believed, the Bible was the sole authority in all matters pertaining to the Christian faith, many Catholic beliefs and practices would have to be given up. The Reformers were not agreed among themselves as to how this rule was to be applied. Luther, for example, retained more of Catholicism than Calvin did, believing that what was not contrary to Scripture was to be allowed. This pertained, however, not to central beliefs, but to various practices, such as the use of candles and pictures as aids to worship. Calvin tended to reject anything which was not specifically enjoined in the Scriptures. Because of this difference in point of view, Calvinistic churches and forms of worship were usually much more plain than those of the Lutherans.

All the Reformers were agreed, however, that there were many Catholic beliefs and practices which not only were not enjoined by the Scriptures, but were actually in conflict with its teaching. Such, for example, was the case with respect to the sacraments. There had been considerable disagreement among Catholic leaders as to how many sacraments there really were. Some spoke of only two; one man declared there were thirty. The number was officially fixed at seven in the year 1439. They were as follows: baptism, confirmation, penance, the Eucharist, extreme unction, marriage, and ordination. It was further claimed that Christ himself had instituted all of the seven.

The Protestant Reformers rejected five of the Catholic sacraments as unscriptural. They saw clearly that Jesus had instituted baptism and the

Lord's Supper (the Catholic "Eucharist"), but nowhere in the Bible could they find authorization for the other five. The Reformers found it necessary, not only to set aside five of the Catholic sacraments, but to revise thoroughly the two that remained. To their minds a good deal, both in theory and practice, had become attached to the observance of the two sacraments which was not in accord with the simple institution of them in the Scriptures.

The Catholic Church had made baptism a requirement for salvation. As a matter of fact, baptism brought salvation about, since it was said to deliver the person from original sin and its guilt, as well as from the guilt of actual sin committed up to the time baptism was received. The Reformers regarded baptism as a Christian duty which was not to be neglected. It had been commanded by Christ. But the application of water brought about no magical change in the individual. Not the act of baptism itself, but faith in God's promise, always associated with the act, would make one right with God. In the case of infants, the faith of the parents was accepted by God for the children until such time as the latter were able to express their own. Meanwhile, the love and mercy of God, the concern and care of the church, and the nurturing of the child in Christian faith by the parents, worked together for the salvation of the children. Baptism publicly signified that the recipient was a member of the Christian community.

Several features of the Catholic observance of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper had to be given up. The sacrifice of the Mass, as the Holy Communion came to be called, had become a highly developed liturgical service, far removed from the simplicity of that first "Lord's Supper," recorded in the Gospels. The Catholic Church believed that when Jesus said, "This is my body," the entire substance of the bread was changed into his body. When He said, "This is my blood," the entire substance of the wine was changed into his blood. The appearance of bread and wine remained, but Jesus Christ was whole and entire under these appearances. He became actually present on the altar. The act of effecting this change was called "transubstantiation." After it had taken place, the people received this body and blood of Christ in the Communion. Participation both removed guilt and communicated grace. Prior to the Reformation, the priest was often said to have had the power of "creating God." The officiating priest was sometimes referred to as the "creator of God."

Though the various Reformation churches were not agreed as to the exact manner in which Christ was to be regarded as present at his Supper, they were agreed that the Catholic way of looking upon the matter was mistaken. The bread and wine did not undergo the changes claimed. Luther held that the body and blood of Christ existed along with the



bread and wine. Zwingli believed the Lord's Supper was primarily a memorial feast, while John Calvin maintained that Christ was truly there, but in a "spiritual manner." From a strictly Biblical point of view, the Reformers were convinced that the Lord was present at his own Table, but they found no Biblical foundation whatsoever for the curious Catholic belief. The expression, "This is my body," can not be taken any more literally than can the words, "As oft as ye drink this cup." Jesus called himself "the vine," "the door," "the way," etc. He used figurative language often, and it is found frequently on the pages of the Old and New Testaments.

Even more unacceptable to the Reformers was the Catholic view that the Mass was a sacrifice. The teaching was that the sacrifice of the Mass was the same sacrifice as that on the Cross, because in both instances Jesus Christ was the victim and the principal priest. At every celebration of the Mass Christ, though invisible, was the principal priest, and as such he offered himself as a sacrifice. The visible priest is quite secondary. The Mass has sometimes been called the "unbloody repetition" of Christ's sacrifice. It has the same merit as the Cross. More than that, it has a life-giving efficacy for those absent and present, for the dead and the living. Its efficacy is as great whether the priest is alone or in the presence of a congregation.

The Protestant Reformers repudiated the whole notion of the sacrifice of the Mass as being completely out of accord with the Scriptures. Jesus died but once and in that one death he completed the work of propitiation for the sins of the world. "He died unto sins once" (Rom. 6:10). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Many other passages make the same emphasis. But besides these there are the frequent references to the fact that when Jesus left the earth after his resurrection, he would not appear again in physical form until the time of the end. "I go to my Father, and ye see me no more" (John 16:10). "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). During his physical absence, he would be represented fully by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (John 16:7). He said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20), and that he has ever been by his Spirit.

We have indicated only a few of the Reformation objections to Roman Catholic sacramental practice. It would require a rather lengthy volume to treat all of them in detail. We have said enough to make it clear that the Reformers found very little in that practice which could be retained. The "traditions of men" had had far more to do with Catholic sacra-



mental practice than had the plain teaching of the Scriptures. Where such traditions were found to be contrary to that teaching, thorough revision, and often outright rejection, was the order of the day.

We can not leave this subject, however, without making some mention of the sacrament of penance, and that which came to be associated with it, the practice of indulgences. The rejection of this sacrament was closely associated, especially for Luther, with the great Reformation truth known as "justification by faith alone." Penance, in Catholic teaching, guaranteed the forgiveness of sins as often as they were committed and confessed. When the Catholic left the confessional, he was fit and ready for heaven, unless, of course, he sinned again. In this process of securing forgiveness for the sinner, the priest was an indispensable agent. He was the intermediary between the sinner and God, and he possessed the power of pronouncing absolution. The Reformers taught that the sinner had immediate access to God, and, if properly penitent, he was assured of pardon without any priestly agency. Hebrews 4:16 had given that assurance: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The sacrament of penance had been based upon an improper translation of the New Testament Greek word *metanoia*. Literally, this word meant a "change of mind," but the Catholics translated it as "penance." The verb form they made read "do penance." Thus an outward ritual came to be substituted for the inner change of mind or heart. In addition to this, the Catholic notion of penance was based upon the right of "binding and loosing" conferred upon the apostles by Jesus (Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23). This power, which involves absolution or release from sin, is often referred to as the "power of the keys." John 20:23 gives the most direct expression of it: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

The Catholic Church reserved the power of the keys, to forgive or not to forgive, to the original Apostles and their supposed successors, bishops and priests. The Reformers, who found the setting up of a priestly class with peculiar powers over the congregation contrary to the Biblical description of the New Testament church, reserved that power to the congregation. In the Catholic practice the priest acquits the sinner or condemns him; in the Protestant the promises and warnings of the Gospel are proclaimed. The congregation might separate from itself the hardened, persistent, impenitent sinner, or restore such a one when he had sincerely repented. But only God has the authority to forgive the sinner, or to condemn him. It is plain that the Catholic Church had assumed the power of life or death, and that eternally, over her people. The Reformed churches claimed no such power, but by use of the "keys" believed the Gospel must

be preached and church discipline must be exercised. By these means the kingdom of heaven was opened to believers and shut to unbelievers. But only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7).

In early medieval times there arose, in connection with the sacrament of penance, a practice known as the granting of indulgences. The authority to grant them was limited to the popes and bishops of the church. Indulgences provided release from temporal punishment to those whose sins had already been forgiven through the sacrament of penance. The theory was that though the sacrament provided forgiveness and restoration of sanctifying grace, a partial penalty remained upon the sinner for his sins. Some of this penalty (temporal punishment) could be taken care of by performing the penances prescribed by the priest. The remainder must be paid for by the suffering of pain in purgatory. A plenary indulgence was said to remove all penalty, and a partial indulgence, some of it. The Catholic Church devised many ways for the securing of indulgences by pious folk and even resorted, in Luther's day, to the sale of them. Thus the rich man could obtain entrance into heaven simply by giving generous sums to the church, and by so doing he did not have to suffer for his sins. So, at least, he thought.

Underlying the practice of indulgences was the notion that in heaven there was a "treasury of merits," consisting of the infinite merits of Christ, and the merits of the Virgin Mary and the saints. The Catholic Church believed that Mary and the saints had accumulated more merits than were required for their salvation. This "Spiritual Treasury of the Church" was made available to the church, and by her, distribution of these superfluous merits was made in the form of indulgences. The authority to distribute indulgences was based upon the power of the keys just referred to. Indulgences can be secured for oneself, to shorten one's anticipated stay in purgatory, but also for the dead, to reduce their term there.

There can be no question that to the Reformers this whole scheme was offensive. They found no authorization for any of it in the Bible. Not only did God alone forgive sins; when He forgave them, both the guilt and the penalty were removed. They were able to point, for example, to I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Nowhere in the Scriptures was it indicated or even implied that when the sinner sincerely repented and was hence forgiven, he had yet to perform certain good works in order to erase "temporal penalties." Rather, on the basis of the sacrifice Christ once made for sins, the latter were completely forgiven and nothing remained for the forgiven sinner but to seek to avoid committing such sins again. "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Neither did the Scriptures afford any basis for the belief in the existence

of a purgatory. The Catholics had found some justification for it in II Maccabees 12:39-45, where it was noted that propitiation was made "for them that had died, that they might be released from their sin." The books of Maccabees, incidentally, were not regarded by the Reformers as a legitimate part of the canonical Scriptures. Hence the Maccabees passage was not accepted as authoritative for Christian doctrine. In the New Testament the Catholics looked to Matthew 12:31f., where reference was made to the sin against the Holy Ghost, a sin not to be forgiven "in this world nor in that which is to come." This implied that there were some sins which might be expiated in an intermediate state in the life to come. I Corinthians 3:15 was also quoted in support of the idea, for here it was clearly said: "but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." In addition to this Scriptural evidence, Catholics pointed to the many references to purgatory made by the "Church Fathers" of the early Christian centuries. They spoke of prayers for the dead and the Holy Sacrifice for the dead, all of which would have been meaningless if there were no purgatory. Since, as we indicated earlier, the traditions of the fathers had equal authority with the Bible itself, the Catholic Church had no difficulty believing in the existence of purgatory.

The Protestant Reformers rejected this doctrine because they could not accept the Catholic interpretation of the Scripture passages noted, and because they found the Biblical conception of the future life to be completely at variance with it. When Jesus said that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost would never be forgiven either here or hereafter, He did not imply that other sins would be forgiven in a future existence. A doctrine so weighty can not be built upon an implication, especially upon so dubious a one. The expression "as by fire" in I Corinthians 3 was a proverbial one meaning a "narrow escape." The thirteenth verse of the same chapter declares that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." To be consistent the Catholic would have to claim that if the fire referred to is purgatory, every person must ultimately submit to its refining. This he does not do, holding that many go at once to hell, where the fires are not purgative, or to heaven. It goes without saying that the Reformers found the opinions of the "Church Fathers" on this theme completely unacceptable, and for the same reason. Their views were not in accord with the Scriptures.

The Reformers found that the Bible spoke plainly of heaven and hell, and that it said nothing about a purgatory. In Matthew 25:46 Jesus declared, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." And then Jesus assured the dying thief, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." No good works were required of him, nor was he informed that he would have to undergo a long period of

purgation for his rather obvious sins. The New Testament writers definitely lay the impression that departure from this life meant an end to suffering as far as the Christian believer was concerned. Paul, for example, would depart and be with Christ, "which", he says, "is far better." John affirmed that the "dead who die in the Lord rest from their labors" (Rev. 14:13). The steady confidence was in the Christ who had fully atoned for every one of the believer's sins. His saving work had been a complete one; the believer could add nothing to it.

The Protestant Reformers' strict adherence to the Scriptures, in judging of Catholic beliefs and practices, forced them to reject or revise much else of their inherited religion. The whole priestly system, with the pope at its head, was found to be without Biblical warrant. The claim of the pope to be Christ's vicar (substitute) was developed by Catholic tradition, and its Biblical basis was highly strained and completely dubious. The veneration given the Virgin Mary was condemned, mainly because it could not be distinguished from adoration. Many Catholics, indeed, seemed to be giving Mary, in actual practice, the attention and worship befitting a goddess. The Reformers accorded Mary the highest honor as the mother of Jesus, but looked upon her as a sinner needing God's saving grace for salvation. They refused to hold, with the Catholics, that God had miraculously preserved her from all taint of sin, both in her conception (the "Immaculate Conception") and in her life.

Thus Reformation belief and practice came to be sharply opposed, at points large and small, to Catholic religion. Even when they seemed to resemble one another in a particular feature, the resemblance was often merely formal. It was a case of using the same words but meaning something very different by them. The Reformers found they could not pick and choose from among various elements of Catholic religion. They had to condemn the Catholic "system" in its entirety. That system of belief had no doubt been able to assure multitudes that their lives were being safely directed to the moment of "beatific vision," when they would meet God face to face. But the Reformers found it a spurious comfort. It was not at all in accord with that spoken of in Holy Scriptures, that which would come to be so well expressed in one of the great catechisms of the Reformation, the Heidelberg, in its first question and answer:

What is thy only comfort in life and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that, without the will of my Father in heaven, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for

my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.

This set out the truth of the Scriptures in simple, but compelling form. It made it plain that one was not saved eternally by popes and lesser men, nor by a system of sacraments which guarded his life from cradle to grave, nor by his own efforts at achieving righteousness. He was justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ our Lord. Men were able only to guide others to the Christ who gave salvation; they were not permitted to confer it, or withdraw it, themselves. The Bible, and the Bible alone, had the authority to say that this was God's way for man.

## EMPIRICAL THEOLOGY AND REVELATION

GARRET WILTERDINK

As time has progressed, I have come to feel more and more strongly that the basic question with which empirical theology must grapple in our day, is the question of revelation. Certain contemporary theologians (outstandingly Karl Barth) have accused empiricism of denying or distorting the importance and nature of revelation in Christian theology. We shall examine this accusation to see if it is a valid one and attempt to determine how empiricism must meet this accusation.

I. *The Nature of Revelation*—We begin by a consideration of the nature of the concept of revelation in Christian theology. The opponents of empiricism maintain that revelation is the keystone of religious knowledge. God is known only in so far as he makes himself known. Christian history is not so much the account of man's search for God as it is God's self-disclosure to man. This has been the backbone of Christian theology through the centuries. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not."

The nature of revelation can be understood from the viewpoint of the words "breakthrough" and "encounter." These two terms somewhat overlap in meaning but I shall discuss the first from a rather negative standpoint, using it to define the *need* for revelation and the situation into which revelation comes. Under the second term, "encounter," I shall approach the subject from the standpoint of the *quality* of revelation.

To understand revelation as "breakthrough," we must see that its fundamental characteristic is that it is *God's act*. God breaks through into human history and human experience. The Bible is the history of these self-revelatory acts of God, consummating in Christ. Going one step further, we see revelation as *historical* breakthrough. It contains the distinctive element of particularity with both continuity and discontinuity implied. It embodies novelty yet is normative and decisive. "An historical claim is asserted and is vital to Christianity. The groundwork of the Gospel is, and continues to be a human story" (Wm. Manson, *Jesus the Messiah*, p. 12). The Christian "myth" is the form of thought in which time is taken absolutely seriously. This seriousness of time underlines the uniqueness of the Christian foci: there is only one creation, one fall, one atonement, one resurrection (Brunner, *The Mediator*, pp. 386-389). This historical particularity of Christian revelation distinguishes it from all ideological creations of man. The very nature of the revelation reveals

this difference—Christianity does not display the smoothness that we would expect from a purely ideological creation (Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 11). Rather we find in it the unexpectedness, the unpredictability of historical breakthrough. Not only does revelation in the Christian sense mean historical particularity, it also claims decisiveness, finality. Not only does Christian faith claim to be rooted in history, it also claims that the event of Christ is the midpoint in history and that all history is to be understood and judged from this midpoint. The historical fact of Christ is the final meaning of history before it and after it (Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, pp. 19-20).

Integral to the idea of breakthrough is the concept of discontinuity. This is a crucial area of discussion in our day. It is certainly true that an element of continuity is implied in revelation. However, an even stronger element of discontinuity is involved. The Christian view of revelation sees clearly the discontinuity between God and man—that which necessitates the breakthrough into human history. Revelation is the bridging of this gap by God, not in terms of man's subconscious religious awareness, but in terms of a decisive event which calls forth faith and the new being. The Biblical view sees an "otherness" to God, an unapproachability, holiness and majesty which necessitates a radical change before relationship can be restored. That radical change is achieved in the "Christ event."

The reason for this discontinuity is, of course, the fallenness of man. The Biblical view of sin means a break between man and God. This implies a brokenness in the very nature of things. This brokenness or fallenness is the presupposition of revelation. The Christian doctrine of revelation is rightly understood only in relation to sin as rebellion and its result in broken relationship. Revelation in the broad sense is aimed at the restoration of that relationship. Fallenness means not only the loss of relationship, but also incapacity to restore that relationship by self-initiated action. Fallenness means absolute dependence on the revelatory and redemptive activity of God.

We turn now to the quality of revelation as "encounter." This is the way in which God comes to man in revelation. Revelation *means* encounter. It means to "meet" God in his self-disclosure. It is always much more than discovery. Man can discover things but he cannot discover God. Man "meets" God in revelation. For example, the Suffering Servant is not the human discovery of a divine principle; it is a decisive event which confronts us with an undeniable challenge. It, or rather he, encounters us as Judge and Redeemer and calls forth a response. Neither is this response solely a matter of illumination but a response of personal transformation. The reception of revelation does not mean new knowledge; it means new being. "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation."



Revelation as encounter means to meet God as "subject." As Tillich has pointed out, God is not an object among other objects. He is the unconditioned, all-conditioning subject. He is what he is in himself. All other things are as they are in him. As subject he can be known only in so far as he makes himself known. Thus God is supremely subject in the act of revelation. He is the "I" who addresses man as the "Thou." The Biblical view thus sees God as personal. As Brunner says somewhere, God is supremely personal and he wants us to achieve true personality. Therefore, he meets us in the personal encounter of revelation. Revelation is the shock of encounter, but *not* the shock of meeting reality in a conceptual or perceptual sense. It is a person to person encounter. The Other stands before us, not merely as a mirror which turns perception inward upon the nature of things and self, but which calls self outward into community and relatedness with the Other. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

II. *Empiricism in this light*—We shall attempt now to ascertain what empirical theology does with or to this concept of revelation. We must acknowledge that the empiricist often uses the same terms as his opponents. Thus he may speak of the breakthrough or the shock of revelation. However, a deeper investigation reveals some fundamental differences. The empiricist dependence on religious experience as an avenue to God, presupposes a basic continuity between man and God. The "otherness" of God is foreign to his way of thinking. He cannot adequately conceive of or express the unapproachability, holiness or majesty of God. When D. C. MacIntosh says that "God was in Christ," he means that God was working in and through Christ as he works in and through the Christ-like in all human life. The difference is only in "the degree of the presence of the divine quality in his personality" (*Theology as an Empirical Science*, p. 121). He reveals here his presupposition of continuity between man and God and denies the radical breakthrough of revelation.

At the same time that it insists on continuity between man and God, empirical theology ignores the reality of man's fallen existence and the resultant abyss created by sin. It also ignores or denies the noetic effects of sin. As Barth insists, man cannot find God through his own inquiry. Faith is not and cannot be a human possibility. This empiricism denies. Wieman's concept of sin as that which destroys or obstructs creativity, implicitly contradicts the view of revelation which sees it as God's judgment on human history, his breakthrough into man's brokenness. He fails to see Christ as God's ultimate judgment on any history which seeks purely human ends. Christ proclaims that man's source and his *telos* are in God and that the basic relationship of his life is the vertical one. This, I feel, Wieman fails to appreciate. MacIntosh's idea of the human need

for adjustment to the higher power bears some characteristics of an appreciation for the separation between man and God. However, the completely man-initiated quality of this adjustment shows a failure or unwillingness to see revelation as a necessity for restored relationship.

The empiricist also distorts or denies the idea of revelation as personal encounter. Wieman shows how far he is from this idea when he speaks of the need for faith as the need to reverse human attitudes. Faith for him is commitment to the truth of the creative event; it is a deciding to live for the human good; its object is an idea, fully understood. The sole importance of Christ in this context is that he brought a creative, transformative power into his disciples' lives. This power, however, was not in him; he was in it, says Wieman. Christian faith for Wieman is not faith in a person but in an impersonal idea or power. Thus he overlooks the fact that the transformation of the lives of Jesus' disciples was the result of their faith in his person as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christian faith is the faith of the Resurrection. What was resurrected was not an idea or a power, but a person—the living Lord.

MacIntosh also fails to appreciate this aspect of revelation. He says that it is "the consummation of experimental religion. It is another instance of the immanence of the transcendent" (*op. cit.*, p. 109). Revelation here arises from within man. If it confronts him at all, it does so only as an inner illumination, an "Aha!" Contrast this with the Biblical reaction to revelation—"Woe is me!" and "Lord remember me!"

Another crucial point is that empirical theology ends up with a God who inevitably is object, not subject. Here, I believe, lies a fundamental weakness in empiricism and a fundamental denial of the very nature of revelation. This results, as we would suspect, in that empiricists, on the whole, do not attribute consciousness or personality to God. MacIntosh says that the question of whether the divine reality is personal or not is "reserved for later discussion" (*op. cit.*, p. 109). The Christian view of revelation sees the personality of its subject as essential to the very nature of the event. Revelation is a person to person encounter. This is what makes it revelation.

Dr. Meland's cultural-anthropological interpretation of revelation is also in sharp disagreement with the understanding of revelation outlined in Section I. In spite of the Biblical and even conservative sound of some of his statements, he does not understand revelation in the sense of ultimate historical breakthrough—unique, decisive and normative, but rather as a stage in a process of emergence. Instead of saying that Christ reveals that God is love, Dr. Meland says, "Christ bears witness to the tenderness of life as the primary attribute of God" (*Faith and Culture*, p. 144). I feel here an unwillingness to give revelation the character of decisive-

ness or finality and a depreciation of the personal, historical nature of God's revelation in Christ. This is, I believe, typical of empirical theology, which either distorts or denies the Biblical, Christian understanding of revelation.

The question remains whether empirical theology can adjust itself to meet the contemporary criticism based on the concept of revelation. Some may feel that a radical, new empirical theology may save the day, such as an empiricism which understands experience in the broader sense of the total living situation. Such an empirical theology has much in common with existentialism and should thus be acceptable in contemporary theological circles. I would ask, however, whether this broadening of the empirical base would in any way eliminate the fundamental failures of empirical theology in relation to revelation. Paul Tillich might be said to use this broader base. He maintains that all the qualities attributed to God are "symbols taken from our daily experiences and not information about what God did once upon a time or will do sometime in the future" (*Dynamics of Faith*, p. 47). We see clearly here that the breach between this form of thought and a Christian, revelational theology is still broad and complete. If there is any revelation here it is only that of subconscious divine influence or of human discovery of truth. This bears no resemblance to revelation in the Biblical or Christian sense. While so-called "radical empiricism" may give a more holistic approach to truth, it still falls short of a serious concern for revelation. The source of truth still lies in man's experience. Man "awakens" to reality. He "discovers" ultimate meaning in his existence. Regardless of how empirical theology may change its approach and broaden its concepts, any theology which seeks to find God within man or within human experience without a serious dependence on revelation is doomed to failure. The knowledge of God does not come out of experience but it is injected into experience by revelation. Empirical theology cannot give you the God of Christian faith. Empiricism may retain some value as a medium but it does not itself contain the data for Christian theology.

My conclusion is that "empirical theology" is a self-contradictory term. No theology, no true knowledge of God can be achieved by way of the empirical method, when that method depends upon human experience for its content. Only revelation in the sense of "breakthrough" and "encounter" can provide the data of theology. In revelation God stands in judgment upon all human ideas of God, which, however complex they may be and however eminent their proponents, are idolatries in his sight. The only valid stance for a theologian is the stance of faith: standing open to God's self-disclosure and its judgment on him and on his self-conceived ideas of himself and of God.

## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

The Adelpic Society has sponsored a series of most informative meetings this quarter. On September 30, students, faculty, and wives attended a meeting of the Operation Victory Bible Conference conducted by Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse in the Holland Civic Center. Following the public meeting the group met with Dr. Barnhouse for coffee and questions.

Dr. Simon De Vries, pastor of Holland's Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church, was our guest on October 14. He gave a summary of his doctoral thesis: "Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands since 1850."

The meeting of October 21 featured a debate between Drs. Elton M. Eenigenburg and Richard C. Oudersluys on the subject of the ordination of women.

Dr. William Hendriksen, pastor of the Byron Center Christian Reformed Church, was the speaker on October 28. He discussed "The Pastor as a Scholar."

On November 11 Calvin Seminary entertained us with an afternoon basketball game and an evening meeting. Speaker was Dr. Donald Bouma, Chairman of the Department of Sociology of Calvin College.

The Goyim-Missionary Fellow-

ship has sponsored two major activities this quarter. On October 7 Dr. Justin Vander Kolk, professor at New Brunswick and president of the Board of Domestic Missions, spoke about the organization and work of the Domestic Board.

The Goyim sponsored Mission Drive was held on November 2. The students and faculty pledged over \$3400 for a Bible Institute to train the native pastors of Formosa (Taiwan). The day began with a breakfast at which Dr. Raymond Van Heukelom, pastor of First Church, Holland, and member of the Board for the Christian World Mission, spoke concerning some missionary motives and attitudes. In the evening a potluck dinner for the entire seminary family was served by the Adelpia Society. Entertainment was provided for the children while the students, faculty, and wives heard Rev. John Muilenberg, missionary to the Far East, currently on furlough, give an interesting report concerning the mission work in the mountains of Formosa. Rev. Gary De Witt, pastor of Unity Church, Muskegon, conducted the pledging. During the evening two tape recordings were played: a telephone conversation with missionary Carl Schroeder and a concert of sacred choral music by Formosan Christians.

A prelude to the Mission Drive was the appearance on October 24 of Dr. Bob Pierce, president of World Vision, Inc., and Dr. Chen, former chaplain to Madame and Generalissimo Chiang Kai Chek. Both spoke in an extended chapel service.

President John R. Mulder has been absent from his office for a few weeks due to surgery. The seminary family is indeed grateful to God for the recovery of health granted Dr. Mulder.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Theology of the Old Testament*, by Edmond Jacob, translated by Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Alcock, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. Pp. 368. \$5.00.

The need has long been evident for the translation of continental works in this field of study. With the American student's tendency to be limited to reading books only in his own native language, he has regularly found a hieroglyphic curtain of linguistic ignorance separating him from the most recent and informative studies in Old Testament theology. To such a student 1958 is a happy year, for in this auspicious twelvemonth three significant translations have enriched the collections of Old Testament theologies in English. The work of Ludwig Koehler, well known for his Hebrew lexicography, has appeared in a good translation from German by A. S. Todd. More recently, in S. Neuijen's translation from Dutch we have T. C. Vriezen's *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*. The third is the textbook here reviewed, that of the French scholar, Edmond Jacob, Old Testament professor at the University of Strasbourg. It is to be hoped that the stream now flowing will not be dammed until we get the long-expected English edition of Walter Eichrodt's *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, now in the process of a new German edition.

Dr. Jacob's *Theologie de l'Ancien Testament* was originally published in Switzerland in 1955. He divides his work into three parts: God's attributes, God's actions, and the opposition to and final triumph of God's work. The third is really the extension of the second. He lays stress upon the pres-

ence and the action of God, the latter culminating in the election and the covenant. The framework permits the fairly complete elaboration of the doctrines of the Old Testament. It has as its basis the theocentric structure of the Old Testament writers. However, the author could well have let his view of the election and the covenant have more prominence in the actual outline of the book, as befits their importance as cardinal doctrines of the Old Testament.

As is common to most continental scholars, especially those conversant with the contributions of the Scandinavian school, the author recognizes that a final satisfactory view of the Pentateuch has not been developed. His *pro tem* stand is that "the Law is later than the prophets" (p. 27), thus avoiding the implications of the equation of the Old Testament and "the Law." Of course, these implications can be equally well avoided by a realization of the priority of the election and the covenant to the law of Moses.

The Israelite practices and beliefs are presented not as isolated phenomena in the milieu of the life and culture of that day. Numerous parallels are seen with customs of Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Canaanites and others, but the author does not thereby lose sight of the elements in which the religion of Jahweh and his people is unique.

The introductory chapters on historical and methodological matters set the stage for a high conception of the validity and value of Old Testament theology. The majority of contemporary scholars agree on this, departing from the views of their predecessors. Dr. Jacob does not heap condemnation



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on the heads of any scholars, but he sees both good and bad principles and results in and from the work of the leading representatives of successive periods.

The up-to-date bibliographies of recent books and articles placed at the end of each chapter are of great value, particularly to the polyglot.

—SYLVIO J. SCORZA

*Studies in Genesis*, by Daniel T. Niles, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. Pp. 109. \$2.50.

This little book sings and the heart sings with it in glad response to its message. God not only exists. He is the living God, that is, the God who works with significant purpose and to whom we must respond in obedience. Genesis is not the history of what man did or became. Telling us what God did it shows us what God is, and becomes, therefore, the place, as is all the Bible, where we meet God. The approach of the author is thus that of the existentialist, and the book possesses all the strength and weakness of that method.

The author outlines six possible methods of studying the Bible. Those named are the allegorical, typological, didactic, historical, liberal, and the existential. The last named includes the other five. Throughout the book it is apparent that each approach, though considered inadequate by itself, has validity for the author. Thus the results may seem inconsistent to a reader disciplined in the conservative traditions. A tendency to "spiritualize" does seem to be out of harmony with a willingness to accept as sober fact the conclusions of liberal scholarship. It was disconcerting to read that Genesis "was written by a group of men belonging to the priestly families of Israel at that time in exile in Babylon" (p. 54). Nor was it much better to be told concerning the first eleven chapters of Genesis which

are rightly called prologue that "it is inapposite to make an issue of the question regarding the historicity of the early narrative in Genesis, for its object is not to explain why but to describe what man is in his predicament" (p. 53).

The work is divided into three chapters. The first, "The God of the Bible," deals with the God who is, arrives, rules, overrules, works, co-operates, redeems, rejects, fulfills, and delays. Each of these suggestions concerning the activity of the living God comes out of the narrative of Genesis.

"God's Intention and Man's Revolt," is the subject of the second chapter. God's intention is redemption. The purpose of creation is *doxa*. Man seeks his own *eudaimonia*, however, and no longer trusts in the *agape* of God. This is the nature of his sin. The moment he turns from God he ceases to be man, for, while the "dogness" of the dog is in the dog, the "manness" of man is in his relation to God. God, in sovereignty, called Abraham, who through faith in God's *agape* found his *eudaimonia* in the *doxa* of God. Faith is the acceptance of God's sovereignty as rightfully limiting human freedom.

Genesis describes sin in terms of the relationship between man and woman with *eros* replacing *agape*, and then in the wider relations of society as a whole. It ends by showing how God deals with sin and the sinner in the person of Abraham in terms of *krisis* and *charis*. "*Krisis* is *charis* when it evokes repentance. *Charis* is *krisis* when it is met with refusal" (p. 77).

The last chapter, "The Constants of History," treats the facts of God's sovereignty over time, the encounter of grace with sin, the fulfillment of history in Jesus, and the growing body of Christ, the vortex of human action.

That would be a heart of stone which did not respond to the beauty of form and content of this little book.

—RAYMOND R. VAN HEUKELOM

*Jeremiah, Prophet of Courage and Hope*, by J. Philip Hyatt, New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958. Pp. 128. \$2.00.

Dr. Hyatt of Vanderbilt University is a recognized authority on the prophet Jeremiah. The results of his research appear in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *Encyclopedia Americana* and the *Interpreter's Bible*. His new book presents clearly and succinctly, in popular diction and style, the reasons for his interest and enthusiasm over the book of Jeremiah. His aim is to counteract the common view of Jeremiah as the "weeping prophet." He does not deny that the prophet wept occasionally, but he clearly shows that weeping was not the central facet of his character and life. Incidentally, he does not attribute the book of Lamentations to Jeremiah.

In the book of Jeremiah, despite his elimination of a few chapters as not by Jeremiah or Baruch (for which he gives his reasons in the *Interpreter's Bible*), the author constructs a chronology of the life of Jeremiah which is consistent with the Biblical presentation. One usage puzzled this reviewer. After laying the necessary foundation for using the more correct form of the name of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadrezzar, he proceeds to use Nebuchadnezzar in the remainder of the book.

This book is a valuable guide to Jeremiah even for those who disagree with Dr. Hyatt's critical procedures. Jeremiah's position among the great religious leaders of the sixth century B. C. (pp. 29-30: Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius and Lao-tzu) draws its significance inasmuch as he is the courageous, hopeful spokesman of Jahweh.

—SYLVIO J. SCORZA

*The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, by R. V. G. Tasker, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans

Publishing Co., 1958. Pp. 192. \$3.00.

This, the fifth of the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* "for students and Bible readers" is a small, compact study, combining a brief introduction with a commentary, arranged under heads and subheads, dealing with the letter verse by verse, yet never losing sight of the continuity of thought. Prof. Tasker in this, as in the initial volume of this series, has combined the clarity of the teacher and the earnestness of the preacher, discussing the letter within the context of the whole New Testament, and drawing on related passages of Scripture. One will not always agree with the conclusions set forth, but Tasker has provided a fresh and very helpful treatment which calls for a renewed study of the epistle.

The commentary views II Corinthians as a unity. While admitting at least four letters of Paul to the Corinthian church, Tasker feels the initial letter and the so-called "stern letter" are lost (being unsuitable for circulation). He treats 6:14-7:1 as an excursus (cf. 7:2 and 6:13), and accounts for the change of tone in cc. 10—13 by suggesting that Paul, in endeavoring to foster the collection for the saints and to prepare for his coming, seeks to warn the church against certain false apostles, who were contesting his apostleship and seeking to wean the church away from him. Tasker finds nothing in this section so stern as to make Paul regret its writing (cf. 7:8). Further, he feels the mood of the latter section dominates the whole epistle, with the exception of cc. 7—9 (cf. 5:20; 6:1, 11-18; and also 2:13, 14; 7:2). Certainly Prof. Tasker has made plain the necessity of caution before postulating the combining and editing of a multiplicity of letters.

But one wonders whether Tasker has given sufficient consideration to the probability the letters of Paul were edited when presented for wide circulation,

and that the letters (and fragments) to Corinth, in such a corpus, would normally be placed together and copied on scrolls in order of length; the possibility the discussion of the collection may indicate the close of a letter (cf. I Cor. 16; Rom. 15); and the possibility (the collection having caused quite a stir in Corinth) that the problem discussed in cc. 10—13 resulted from the very mission of Titus and the brethren referred to in 8:16-22 (cf. 12:18). Again, it may be questioned whether Tasker has satisfactorily accounted for the change of tone at c. 10. The basic section of cc. 1—9 is 1:1-2:13; 7:5-9:15 with 2:14-7:4 a digression (pp. 28f). Here the climactic emphasis is one of joy and relief at the news Titus brought that the Corinthians were earnest and zealous for Paul (7:7, 11, 13, 15) and the difficulty settled (7:8-13; cf. 2:6-8). How then could Paul so soon become anxious and foreboding about their relation to him (cf. 10:2, 9-12; 11:3, 19, 20; 12:21; 13:7, 10), hoping they would do the right (13:7) and threatening severe measures if they did not (13:10)? Moreover, why should Paul have ended on so stern a note, rather than one of joy and thanksgiving? One cannot help but feel the last word has not yet been spoken on the matter.

—VERNON H. KOOY

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*The Doctrine of the Trinity*, by Cyril C. Richardson, New York: Abingdon Press, 1958. Pp. 159. \$3.00.

In a searching criticism this author, professor of church history and director of graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York, says that the doctrine of the Trinity is an "artificial construct" which "tries to relate different problems and to fit them into an arbitrary and traditional threeness. It produces confusion rather than clarification;

and while the problems with which it deals are real ones, the solutions it offers are not illuminating."

That the *doctrine* of the Trinity had a long history in the Church before its final formulation in the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be disputed and this author knows that history well. Few men in this country have the background in patristic studies similarly to evaluate the subject. Nor can one dismiss the volume as Arian, or Unitarian, or the product of a liberal theology which denies the deity of our Lord, for the author disclaims these errors. At the beginning and at the end of the book he makes his Christology clear. Nor may one pin on him the Sabellian error (p. 123).

The greatest service which a study— a casual reading will not do—of the book has done for this reader is to emphasize the weakness of the traditional rational arguments used to buttress faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. In brilliant fashion Dr. Richardson examines those arguments one by one to show their confusion, irrelevance and/or presumption. An example is his criticism of Leonard Hodgson's recent (1944) work, usually regarded by orthodoxy as an able statement. Hodgson argues for society within the Godhead so that love may abound. Richardson responds that he "is in one sense right when he [Hodgson] observes that 'intensive unity' (as he calls it) is heightened rather than lessened by increasing the number and variety of the elements. The logic of this should perhaps have driven Hodgson to posit an *infinite* number of persons in the Trinity. To stop at three is to have a *less* intensive unity than there might be. However this may be, certain it is that the social analogy with the Trinity involves at least two terms and at most an indefinite number. But three terms is an arbitrary way of conceiving the matter" (pp. 112f.; cf. pp. 92ff.). Richardson's criticism of the treatments of Gregory of Nyssa, of

Augustine and Sabellius, and of such moderns as Dorothy Sayers and Claude Welch is keen and to the point. He believes that in the Bible we have a revelation from God of which Jesus Christ is the center and only Lord and Saviour, but he differs from these authors, and others who help mold Church opinion, in his understanding of the Godhead. What then is his position?

Dr. Richardson believes that the nature of God is paradoxical and that the primary paradox is that God is both related to and beyond the world. The New Testament presents us with the symbols Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these point to vital aspects of the gospel; but this does not mean that they define three different persons of the Godhead. For the New Testament symbolism is in a fluid state and overlaps. E.g., Father is meant to designate God as beyond, yet it is a term of relationship; the terms Son and Spirit often mean the same thing. There is no precise Trinity at any rate. The two aspects of God to which the confusing attempts to construct the doctrine of the Trinity point are his beyondness and his relation to creation. Beyond this paradox, and such it is, human reason cannot go.

Although appreciative of the courageous honesty and erudition of the author, this reviewer feels that his conception of Scripture is inadequate and that this in turn enables him so freely to challenge the New Testament symbolism from which the Church has wrought out—I use the word advisedly—its doctrine of the Trinity. To Richardson part of the gospel is a fabrication, “a reading back into the ministry” of our Lord of that which is recorded but which may not actually have occurred (pp. 39f.). The term Son, originally ascribed to our Lord legitimately, was reinterpreted to mean a heavenly being, and finally to refer to a distinction in the Godhead itself. With that reinterpretation the term should have been abandoned, but it has “remained to plague

trinitarian thinking” (pp. 42f., italics mine). Moreover, Paul “had not thought the matter fully through” when he wrote about the relation of the Son to the Spirit (p. 50).

It seems to us that the New Testament data bears more authority than is here allowed it. Moreover, the difficult problem which the author has with the Holy Spirit in Paul's writings (identical with God's being *vs.* standing over against it, pp. 50f.) is resolved when one accepts the reality of the personal distinctions in the Godhead to which the New Testament seems to us to point. And it is quite possible to conceive of God as beyond and related to us, as Luther did and many of the rest of us do, and also accept the doctrine of the Trinity as a true statement about the nature of God.

In closing, the study of this matter is humbling, or it ought to be, for those whose business it is to read systematic theology. It reminds one that the gospel is foundational to theology, that the latter may err, and that it must everlastingly be evaluated in the light of the Bible.

—M. EUGENE OSTERHAVEN

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*The Conflict with Rome*, by Gerit C. Berkouwer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958. Pp. 319. \$5.95.

The title of this book might lead some people into thinking that its contents are all about ecclesiastical power politics between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Nothing could be further from the truth. The conflict is one of clashing theological views. The book attempts to discuss only the religious and theological questions at issue. Dr. Berkouwer feels that as a theologian his task is limited “to explain as clearly as possible in what way and with what pretensions Rome confronts the world of today.” The basic issue according

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E. ASHBY JOHNSON. In his foreword Albert C. Outler calls this "a needed guide to the study and practice of theology." **\$5.00**

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to the author is that Rome claims to be the only Church, and that she as such confronts the world "with the pretention of having a divine mission and responsibility for the salvation of the world." Consequently, the author's purpose is to deal critically with Rome's entire theological structure rather than with its outward practices. This book, more than any other which the reviewer has read, sharpens our understanding of the real issues which are at stake in the struggle between Rome and the Church of the Reformation. It also makes clearer how difficult it becomes for us to conceive of any restoration of the *Una Sancta*.

The author feels that a clear understanding of each other's viewpoint is a necessary prerequisite before we can ever establish any contact. No difficulty however, should ever give us cause to despair of ultimate reunion. Though it may appear hopeless, "yet this yearning should never be absent from our prayers and action." His ecumenical concern is movingly expressed in the following sentence: "We ought never to predict a hopeless future, without an inner disturbance of the heart, and a sense of calling."

What then are the main issues at which point the conflict with Rome continues so inevitably? The fundamental basis of the conflict lies in the way Rome looked upon the Reformation "as a total dislocation of any authority in the church." Rome accused the reformers of giving birth to individual freedom and of making the individual conscience autonomous and sovereign in all matters of faith and life. This, Berkouwer contends, is a caricature of the reformed view of authority. Although the reformers contended for the relative authority of the church, they understood it in the original sense of "in relation to." The church exists whenever she stands in a completely dependent relation to the divine word of God. Rome, on the

other hand, has replied that the reformed principle of *sola scriptura* does not end every argument. This is witnessed to in the hopeless divisions of Protestantism. Rome sees the reason for this chaos in the fact that even Scripture and Christ are no longer concrete realities to Protestants but are swallowed up in the chasm of individual subjectivity. Only in Rome is there unity of household, for that unity rests upon the "unshakable authority" of the church. Whenever Rome speaks the matter is settled. Rome, however, is careful to point out that her authority is not arrogant but rests upon the doctrine of her identity with Christ. Through the mystical union, Christ and his church are identical. Berkouwer thinks that upon the question of identity the very existence of the Roman church is at stake. For Rome it is really a matter of "to be or not to be." "Here," says the author, "we are confronted with one of the deepest controversies between the Reformation and Rome."

Berkouwer contends that the reformers also emphasized the union of Christ to his church, but it was never conceived so that the authority of the church was considered identical with that of Jesus Christ. The church as Christ's body always remains subject to him. The importance of this correlation is decisive for a true evaluation of the Reformation.

Since Rome believes that the church and Jesus Christ are identical, she also contends that heresy is anything which cuts itself off from the divine life of the church. The reformers on the other hand saw heresy as any view which fails to subject itself to the gospel of Christ as revealed in the word of God. Consequently both blame each other for the breach in the unity of Christ's body.

After clarifying these basic issues, the author goes on to show the development of the controversy in the doctrines of grace, salvation and the incarnation.

A whole chapter is devoted to the discussion of the *Ave Maria* question. The real issue here is the *obfuscation* of God's grace by the overestimation of Mary.

In the final chapter the author discusses the conflict in relationship to the liturgical movement and the dialectic theology of Karl Barth. Although it is quite clear that in the liturgical movement the theology of the incarnation is given only a relative function, he nevertheless feels that such a theology follows quite naturally from Roman Catholic doctrine. That the liturgical movement does not come to a complete Roman conception is due to the fact that it is constantly checked by reformed ideas.

The reviewer regrets that he is insufficiently acquainted with the many quoted sources of contemporary Roman Catholic thought. It is therefore quite impossible to give an objective and thorough evaluation from a critical standpoint. The author is without doubt one of the leading students of Roman Catholic theology in the Netherlands.

Dr. Berkouwer is no stranger to the Reformed churches in America. Thanks to a number of dedicated translators, many of his fine books are now available to us. He is probably known best for his critical interpretation of Karl Barth in his *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*.

The present book under review is further credit to the careful and critical scholarship of the Dutch professor from the Free University of Amsterdam.

—JAMES C. EELMAN

*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, edited by George A. Williams and Angel M. Mergal, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957. Pp. 394. \$5.00.

This book is Volume 25 of the *Library of Christian Classics*, a presen-

tation in English in twenty-six volumes of "a selection of the most indispensable Christian treatises written before the end of the sixteenth century." The present book consists of two parts: the first, a selection of writers illustrative of the Radical Reformation, and the second, a presentation of Evangelical Catholicism as represented by the Spaniard, Juan de Valdés.

The preface speaks accurately when it describes the selections chosen as "little known to modern readers." In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness that the Radical Reformation was as distinctive as the Lutheran, Calvinistic, or Anglican movements, and that, like them, it has something to contribute to the wholeness of Christ's Church today.

Van Dusen's recent article in *Life* magazine on "The Third Force" indicates the size and virility of the wing of Protestantism which includes the spiritual descendants of Menno Simons, Conrad Grebel, Melchior Hoffman, Obbe Philips, and Caspar Schwenckfeld. Lesslie Newbigin in his *Household of God* points up the necessity of allowing present-day groups in this wing of the Church to add their insights to the other branches.

The excellent introduction by George Williams is not merely useful; it is indispensable. The average minister cannot make his way through the bewildering variety of movements and viewpoints without a guide.

Certain insights of the Radical Reformation are shared by a number of otherwise dissimilar groups: separation of the church from the civil order, renunciation of war, disappointment with the moral and spiritual state of territorial Protestantism, a desire to return to apostolic practice, an emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

There is much wild allegorizing, much speculative treatment of prophecy and apocalyptic, much concern with the

*eschaton*. The Anabaptists proper, the Spiritualists, and the Evangelical Rationalists are all represented by the selections chosen. The "Trial and Martyrdom of Michael Sattler" reminds the modern reader that these "radicals" suffered as much from the hands of Protestants as Protestants did from the hands of Romanists.

There is an excellent bibliography at the end of part one wherein are listed all the writings of the Radical Reformation available in English.

The second part of the book is given to the works of the Spanish reformer, Juan de Valdés. An introduction by Angel M. Mergal helps the reader to orient Valdés in the complex religious scene of the sixteenth century.

Beginning with his "Dialogue on Christian Doctrine," which is mildly Erasmian, the compiler proceeds to the "One Hundred and Ten Considerations," in which Valdés breaks with his confidence in human prudence and reason. The Holy Spirit in the life of the penitent works sovereignly to create faith within, and the Kingdom of God without. The last selection by Valdés is his "Christian Alphabet, Which Teaches the True Way to Acquire the Light of the Holy Spirit."

Mergal writes, "The point of departure in the thinking of Valdés is his perception, as much emotional as intellectual, of a fundamental contradiction of man and God." An example of this contradiction is "the incapacity of man to obey the absolute commandment of love." Valdés' fascination with antinomies reminds one of more recent dialectical theology.

Although he died within the Roman Church, Valdés was not Romish in his thinking. All his works were placed on the Index. But he remains as one of the most Christlike thinkers of sixteenth century Spain, and a man who did much for Spanish letters.

Any selection of materials for a book of this sort is bound to be criticized



by specialists as arbitrary. But nothing more than a sampling from a very large literature is claimed, and this reviewer found the sampling illustrative of the period. Many will wish to consult the bibliographies for further study.

— HAROLD N. ENGLUND

*Jonathan Edwards on Evangelism*, edited by Carl J. C. Wolf, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958. Pp. xii-137. \$2.00.

*Jonathan Edwards, the Preacher*, by Ralph G. Turnbull, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1958. Pp. 1-192. \$3.95.

*Jonathan Edwards' Sermon Outlines*, a choice collection of thirty-five model sermons, The World's Great Sermons in Outline series, selected and edited by Sheldon B. Quincer, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958. Pp. 1-164. \$2.50.

These three books are the latest additions to the swiftly growing bibliography on Jonathan Edwards. The bibliography has been large and the field is becoming more crowded. Since so much has been written about Jonathan Edwards, only the best authors and writers need to enter the subject of study. The new edition of Edwards' works by Paul Ramsey of Princeton University and the series by Perry Miller are placing the best of Edwards before the American public.

*Jonathan Edwards on Evangelism* is a collection of Edwards' better known writings. "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God" and "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections" which are included in this collection are two works every seminary

student and minister should read. For an introduction to Edwards, this book may serve the purpose, but all of the writings that Wolf selected have been cut down greatly. If this will be the first acquaintance with Edwards, it will not be an extensive one. The introduction by Wolf and the attached biographical sketch enable the reader to become acclimated to Edwards.

Why the book should be entitled *Jonathan Edwards on Evangelism* is uncertain. All of the selections were written by Edwards before, during, and after the Great Awakening in New England and to that extent can be grouped under the subject of evangelism. Many other titles could have been given to the very same selection of writings. However, if the present day evangelists can be induced to read the book because of that caption, some good may result. The theological impact of Edwards would usefully serve many current American revivalists and evangelists.

Editor Wolf does not offer any critical comment except one. There is no indication where materials have been cut. In summary, the most the book can offer is a very simple introduction to Jonathan Edwards. If the book compels anyone to delve further into the works of the great American theologian and philosopher, it would serve its purpose.

Ralph Turnbull, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Seattle, Washington, hoped to give a new slant to Jonathan Edwards by viewing him exclusively as a preacher. The book is an expansion of his article in *Interpretation*, October, 1952, "Jonathan Edwards, Bible Interpreter." That article would still serve as a good summary of the book.

In preparation for the book, Turnbull visited the many libraries where the Edwards' manuscripts were located. The book reveals a wide acquaintance with Edwards' writings. It is unfortunate, however, that a better knowledge of Edwards did not result. The hosts

of facts dredged up by Turnbull have done little to give a better understanding of Jonathan Edwards even as a preacher.

From the start, Turnbull used an apologetic approach. He knew that Edwards was a great man and he set out to defend him as a preacher from the critics. With some difficulty, there had to be admitted that Edwards' delivery was dull, that he was a pastor who made few calls upon his people, that he did not show good sense in asking for a raise in salary at the time great opposition was building up against him in the congregation. It is readily admitted that Jonathan Edwards was a great preacher but this is based upon the fact that he was a great theologian. Hence *Jonathan Edwards the Preacher* needs to be reckoned with as a theologian. In this volume, his theological ideas are covered in a few pages.

The book fails in many places. The style of the author is extremely prolix and protracted. The organization of the material is centered about thirty headings which caused the author to be extremely repetitive. The homiletical summary of Edwards in seven points on the last page of the book could well have served as an outline for the book. Footnotes clutter the text. After the long study Turnbull has made of Edwards, he often used quotations from secondary sources for conclusions. This detracts from the freshness of the book which was intended to give us a new slant on Edwards. The scantiness of the index renders it useless.

The appendix of the book gives eight sermon outlines to illustrate the various types of sermons that Edwards preached. This is for the purpose of showing that not all of Edwards' sermons were imprecatory, such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The value of the book lies in the inclusive, up-to-date bibliography and the information where the Edwards' manuscripts can be found.

The last book under consideration is

a compendium of 35 sermon outlines by Edwards. It seems that they would be useless to any reader unless he were acquainted with all of Edwards' thought. Presumably the outlines are to aid the busy pastor in sermon preparation. Because Edwards' sermons were lengthy, this editor had to scale them down considerably in order to get 35 into this volume.

All three volumes are additions to the bibliography of Edwards. All will give some knowledge, more or less, of Edwards. None of them gets to the heart of Edwards. None is a contribution to a better understanding of this great American theologian and philosopher.

—ELTON J. BRUINS

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*The Greatest of These is Love,*  
by A. A. van Ruler, trans. by Lewis B. Smedes, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958. Pp. 7-111. \$2.00.

Any student of Scripture who would enjoy reading a devotional book which is as beautiful as it is thought-provoking can do no better than read this exposition of I Corinthians 13. Its author, professor of Dogmatic Theology in the University of Utrecht, has been aptly called by Professor G. C. Berkouwer of Amsterdam "an original and provocative thinker." One sees that in this small volume as well as in other of his writings which are known to this observer.

It is difficult knowing where to begin as one sets out to summarize or evaluate this study. It is so chaste that one hesitates to analyze or compare, and summarization, if possible, would be only the provision of a cheap substitute for those who should read the book itself. Van Ruler has been almost unknown in the American Church world. I am happy that the publisher and trans-

lators have collaborated in the production of this volume. It is a fine introduction of the author to a portion of the American religious public.

—M. EUGENE OSTERHAVEN

*A Brief History of the Reformed Church in America*, by Elton M. Eenigenburg, Grand Rapids: Douma Publications, 1819 Newton Avenue, S. E., 1958. Pp. 110. \$.90.

Dr. Elton M. Eenigenburg, Professor of Historical Theology in the Western Theological Seminary, presents in this small, paper-bound book "a brief and simple history of the Reformed Church in America." Apparently the book is designed as a textbook for adult education classes or for senior high young people's courses, since "questions" are placed at the end of the book for discussion purposes.

Although the book is "brief and simple" it fills a very large gap. The writer in his preface to the book says that he hoped "that more than one reader will be pressed to seek the more complete narrative elsewhere." It so happens that that is not possible. There is no more complete narrative elsewhere. Dr. Eenigenburg's small book is the only complete, up-to-date history of the Reformed Church in America. This fact gives the book a very great importance, far greater than the author himself realizes.

The histories of the Reformed Church in America are old. The last edition of David Demarest's history is dated 1888. Edward Corwin's history in the American Church History series is dated 1895. The last edition of Corwin's *Manual of the Reformed Church in America* is 1922. Willard Dayton Brown's history was published in 1928. The last book that can be called a history of the Reformed Church is now thirty years old. That is not the only

problem. Since these books are old, none of them adequately gives a full picture of the denomination's history. They all fail to chronicle and relate the impact upon the Reformed Church of the mid-nineteenth century immigration to the Middle West under the leadership of A. C. Van Raalte. This history corrects that failure.

Another important feature of this short history is the balanced presentation of the materials available for inclusion. The earlier histories, especially Corwin and Brown, tended to give far too much space to the early history of the church on Manhattan. It is all very interesting, but the history of the church during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries needs its proportionate space, which Dr. Eenigenburg gives in his book. Along with that feature is the writer's use of historical judgment. The other histories often fall into the error of sentimental adulation, the besetting sin of denominational histories. The old history of the Reformed Church, its founding on Manhattan, its founding of the first theological seminary, its excellent work in missions, often blinded the eyes of previous writers to the failures and errors of this old denomination. But in this book such matters as the very obvious failure of the denomination to follow the frontier are mentioned. A history that points up failures as well as successes is far more informative than the history which points out the bright spots only.

Inadvertently, this brief history is also a tract for the times. The theological orientation of the denomination through the standards of faith is given careful consideration, with the message that they are very important to the life of the denomination. The cooperative efforts of the Reformed Church in missions and other church activities point up the important ecumenical interests of the church in spite of the fact that some very conservative elements in the church pressure it to "go it alone."

The shortcomings of the book are few. No publishing date is given. An up-to-date bibliography would be very helpful. Footnoting should be done where direct quotations are made. The spelling of the name of John á Lasco is not consistent on pages 17 and 18. The old spelling of Puerto Rico is made on page 32 because the author paraphrased a quotation from Corwin's *Manual*, 4th ed., p. 18. Varied spelling is made of the name of the "Visitor of the Sick." Was he Huygen or Huyck? The spelling of Polhemus is written as Polhemius by the author. Corwin would be helpful in standardizing the spelling of the proper names of the early Dutch ministers. Although the writer's style is clear and simple, he is at times condensing his material so greatly that the style suffers, as on the top of page 33. On page 54, the correct date for the discontinuance of the seminary in Flatbush was 1797, not 1787.

With a few minor corrections, the book definitely deserves to be enlarged and published in hard cover. It is a fine addition to the bibliography of the Reformed Church in America.

—ELTON J. BRUINS

*Understanding the Bible*, by Fred J. Benbeaux, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. Pp. 94. \$1.00.

This book is one in the series of *The Layman's Theological Library* of which Robert McAfee Brown is editor. It is written in language which the intelligent layman can appreciate and understand.

The first two chapters entitled, "A Serious Plea for Lay Scholarship," and "The Tools of Biblical Study," show why Protestantism has stressed education and personal involvement in the Biblical narrative. In the third chapter, "The Church Tries to Understand What God

Has Done," we are told that we must unite the inventive approach to the Bible of Catholicism, the literalistic of Protestantism, and the fanatic of sectarianism. Here as elsewhere in the book it is apparent that anything distinctive is distasteful to the author, and oversimplification is employed as a tool to support a point of view.

Going on to a study of "The Words of Man and the Word of God," we are told that "the Bible represents the collective attempt on the part of Hebrew man to find the words with which God's word can be recorded" (p. 44). Chapter five, "An Ancient Story Which Is Our Story," concludes the discussion of the story of Israel's deliverance as a description of ours, with a consideration of the joy and risk of creatureliness. "Creatureliness consists of that quality of life which we have when we trust God" (p. 65). The last chapter, "Re-creation and Renewal," says some important things about our unwillingness to accept Jesus as the New Testament presents him because modern man wants to be first, but not first to the cross.

We can recommend this volume only to the layman unusually well grounded in both the content and criticism of the Bible. But that layman would have the least use for it in that he would already possess the one good thing to be found in its pages, the admonition to be intelligent and informed about the Bible. One who is not aware of evidence on the other side of the question should not be told as though it were beyond question that not even Moses could be a writer of our Bible (p. 24), or that the story of Jacob at Bethel was invented during the time of David or Solomon to woo readers away from the Canaanite Baals who had been worshipped at Bethel (pp. 26f.). A few additional instances of unacceptable conclusions may be given. Abraham is a name to be put in quotation marks because we cannot be sure of his identity. He is a symbol for the first believer (p. 51). Even "J"

is still employed to do his part to give us a far from infallible, and something less than authoritative Bible (pp. 58ff.). The Bible is reduced to an important book among other important books. It may not be used to eliminate other points of view, such as Hinduism or Buddhism (pp. 92f.).

No intelligent cook would send an uninformed person after mushrooms among toadstools. The dangers in this book are no less real.

—RAYMOND R. VAN HEUKELOM

*The International Lesson Annual* 1959, ed. by Charles M. Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press. Pp. 5-448. \$2.95.

The volume under review is subtitled, "A Comprehensive Commentary on The International Sunday School Lessons." Its aim is to provide the well-rounded help which is needed for effective teaching on the adult level. The following aids are included for each week's lesson: the complete Biblical text (both in the King James and the Revised Standard versions), an exegetical treatment, a contemporary application, suggestions for teaching, and a series of annotated Bible readings for each day of the week. In addition to these regular features, there are general introductions to each quarterly unit, and special articles for significant days in the church year. The index of Scripture passages at the close helps to lend a more permanent usefulness to the work.

The contributors to this issue of *The International Lesson Annual* are numerous. Although predominantly Methodist, the list includes prominent names from other traditions as well. The lesson analyses for the entire year are written by Roy L. Smith.

Like most composite works of its kind, the book presents material of varied interest and helpfulness. The exe-

getical insights are often of notable value, as are the practical suggestions on teaching technique. Those in the Reformed tradition will be compelled at times to take issue with the theological views presented, particularly as they find expression in the sections on contemporary application. One could well wish for a clearer emphasis here upon Biblical themes such as the gravity of sin, and the centrality of Christ's atoning work. Apart from these deficiencies, however, the book offers much that will enlighten the lay reader and enrich the ministry of those who teach.

—WILLIAM C. BROWNSON, JR.

*Making the Most of Your Best*, by David A. MacLennan, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. Pp. 183. \$3.00.

Dr. David A. MacLennan is an eminent author and minister. He is the author of several well known books; as a minister he serves the Brick Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, and teaches homiletics and liturgics at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

*Making the Most of Your Best* consists of thirty-one meditations originally given by the author as a weekly broadcast series. In these meditations Dr. MacLennan addresses himself to the needs of men and points up the necessity for positive believing.

There are four basic divisions in the book. Part I deals with faith and discipline. In this division the author deals with basic truths of our faith along with necessary disciplines in the Christian life. In my opinion this is the weakest part of the book. Chapter 4 addresses itself to the significance of the Cross. One short paragraph is given to the death of Christ and its meaning, whereas a large section is given to what in essence is the moral influence theory.

This is what the author apparently sees in the cross—"Will you try to see the life and sacrifice and victory of Jesus Christ as an expression of the dynamic principle: unlimited trust in God and unlimited self-giving for others in the spirit of Jesus?" Likewise chapters 5 and 6, which deal with the resurrection and the Bible, are rather weak in exposition. Part II deals with peace and happiness. This division has some wonderful chapters. Chapter 12, entitled "Overlooking the Obvious," is a real stimulant. Speaking about the fact that we go through life so unperceptive, MacLennan states: "Isn't it often because we grow lazy and careless that we look at windows instead of through them, look at people instead of into them?" Another outstanding chapter is Chapter 13, "Are You in the Right Place?" The author would have us come to grips with the question whether or not we have the courage to face up to the fact that we might not be in the right place—the right vocation. Does the Christian faith offer us anything to make the place where we are the right place? Part III deals with Christian character. As long as there is life there will be a need for relating our faith to our actions. All of us need to work at making our belief behave. Part IV deals with the idea of overcoming life's problems. In this, the closing section of the book, the author shows how positive believing can overcome disappointment, fatigue, criticism, temper, self-centeredness, and a host of other problems.

This book will enrich your life. It has a wealth of illustrative material. It has warmth. It has humor. It has penetrating insight. The author has the ability to paint a picture for you so that it is impossible to miss the point which he wants to make. Here is an example. Speaking of fellowship within the Church he comments: "Sometimes in spite of the best intentions of pastors and officials, the spiritual

air conditioning works in reverse, and instead of being human beings we act like polar bears. But I'll wager that a cold reception by the manager never kept you away from your favorite movie." Going on to explain the function of the church he writes: "Of course, churches aren't supposed to be exclusively gymnasiums for flabby souls or nurseries for hypersensitive Peter Pans of both sexes—children who refuse to grow up. Nor are churches first-aid stations for the thin-skinned who have had some bruises in life's traffic."

—EDWIN G. MULDER

*A Faith for the Nations*, by Charles W. Forman, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957. Pp. 7-94. \$1.00.

This is a book for the general reader with a somewhat rationalistic bent. It is one of a series in *The Layman's Theological Library*. Dr. Forman begins in the second chapter by presenting some of the possible rational answers to the question, "What is the Foundation of World Unity?" I would underscore the word "Unity" as the touchstone of his thinking in this book. The part of the book that has more practical relevancy for the lay believer begins with chapter four where he presents the imperative aspect of missions for all believers. Some sentences have a jewel-like quality about them, in the areas of comparative religion and the methodology of missions. If read by an alert layman, there is some food for thought.

Looking at this book from the point of view of the clergy leaves one with some questions in mind. I feel that this book lacks depth in theology and sufficient Scriptural references. There seems to be an oversimplification of the subjects treated. Dr. Forman apparently deals more with the God of Christian-

ity in general than with the Christ of Christianity in particular. The reviewer was fortunate to be able to hear Dr. Forman lecture for a few days this summer at the Meadville Missionary Conference. Some questions have lingered in his mind after having had a brief chat with him about this book. He seems to place a little too much emphasis, relatively, on the objective proclamation of God's act at Calvary. It must be recognized that Dr. Forman is endeavoring to appeal to the general reader of today and that he may be going to an extreme to make his point, and that he has limited his subject by the title of the book. But there is much to be desired, also, in an emphasis upon the power of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of prayer, and the proclamation of the whole counsel of God.

—WILLIAM ESTELL

*Introduction To Christian Education*, by Peter P. Person, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958. Pp. 224. \$3.75.

The author has written this book with the intent of providing a satisfactory text book for an introductory course in the field of Christian education. This work is an expansion of the notes which he used in the classroom as a college teacher. It is intended for use in the college, Bible institute, or seminary.

His presentation is in non-technical terms and consists of an historical sketch of the movements and phases of Christian education as found in the church today. There are chapters on such subjects as the philosophy, the methods, and the curriculum of Christian education. He also deals with the education of the different age groups and proceeds to discuss the various agencies used in the church for the purpose of education. Each chapter is concluded with a list of review questions and questions for discussion.

The author writes from a conservative and evangelical point of view. He is balanced in his opinions and shows an appreciation for the truth that may be found in the more liberal educational philosophies and pedagogical methods. Dr. Person is Professor of Psychology and Christian Education at North Park College, Chicago.

This work represents a contribution to the field for which it is intended. It will also prove helpful for the church worker who is active as a layman in the educational program of the church. Seminary students and ministers will find it beneficial, in that it presents an integrated view of this important facet of their work. It will serve as a "stepping stone" to other works which probe more deeply into certain phases of Christian education.

—KENNETH VAN WYK

*The Meaning of Christ*, by Robert Clyde Johnson, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. Pp. 96. \$1.00.

This book appears as another in *The Layman's Theological Library*. Its aim, like others in the series, is to make the layman aware of how close theology is to him. The author succeeds in a down-to-earth presentation of the cardinal truths of Christianity. He brings the revelation of God and His Christ down to where laymen are. But in doing so he also raises the laymen. More than that, he likewise helps the preacher and the theologian.

The most stupendous event in history is that God appeared in Christ. If this is not true, Christianity is a hoax.

There is no more important question in life than this one: What think ye of the Christ? It is that personal. What others think of him is secondary. What I think of him comes first.

The author maintains that to under-



stand Christ we must be willing to stand under him. Christ demands, not only our knowing him, our believing in him, but our allegiance to him.

Standing under him in faith and obedience, we come to know him as far more than the velvety Jesus who rouses and challenges no one. We come to know him as strong and just as well as loving. We come to know ourselves as sinners who do not care to know the truth about ourselves until he really comes into our lives. He points us to the holiness of God and

to the holiness we can receive by divine grace.

When we come to understand what the cross and the resurrection did for the disciples, we can grasp what these can do for us.

There is no simple meaning of this Christ. He is very God and very man. In him the teaching and the Teacher are inseparable. Christian faith, which is more than faith, understands that.

A reading of this book in an evening or two will do more for the reader than endless nights in a TV chair.

—BASTIAN KRUTHOF

Readers will note on the inside front cover that a subscription rate of \$2.00 per year is now posted. Heretofore *The Review* has been sent free of charge. The new charge, designed to remove our journal from the "house organ" classification, will be on a voluntary basis. Checks or money orders should be made out to the seminary and designated as subscription to *The Reformed Review*.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

## WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

### ARTICLES

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### BOOK REVIEWS

Sylvio J. Scorza is guest professor of Old Testament at the seminary.

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